

OEDIPUS:

A

TRAGEDY

As it is ACTED at His

Royal Highness

THE

DUKE's Theatre.

The AUTHORS

Mr. DRYDEN, and Mr. LEE.

The Fifth Edition.

*Hi proprium decus & parum indignantur honorem
Ni teneant. — Virgil.*

*Vos exemplaria Græcæ,
Nocturna versate manu, versate diurna. Horat.*

L O N D O N,

Printed for Tho. Chapman, at the Angel in the
Pall-mall, over-against St. James's Square 1696.

OF EDIPUS

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It is printed by G. G. and J. W. at the
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Faintly, over against the former's shop.

PREFACE.

THOUGH it be dangerous to raise too great an expectation, especially in works of this Nature, where we are to please an unsatiable Audience, yet 'tis reasonable to prepossess them in favour of an Author; and therefore both the Prologue and Epilogue inform'd you, that Oedipus was the most celebrated Piece of all Antiquity. That Sophocles, not only the greatest Wit, but one of the greatest Men in Athens, made it for the Stage, at the Publick Cost; and that it had the Reputation of being his Master-piece, not only amongst the Series of his which are still remaining, but of the greater Number which are perish'd. Aristotle has more than once admir'd it in his Book of Poetry; Horace has mentioned it: Lucullus, Julius Cæsar, and other noble Romans, have written on the same Subject, tho' their Poems are wholly lost; but Seneca's is still preserv'd. In our own Age, Corneille has attempted it, and it appears by his Preface, with great success: But a judicious Reader will easily observe, how much the Copy is inferior to the Original. He tells you himself, that he owes a great part of his success to the happy Episode of Theseus and Dirce; which is the same thing, as if we should acknowledge, that we are indebted for our good Fortune, to the under-plot of Adrastus, Eurydice, and Creon. The truth is, he miserably failed in the Character of his Hero: if he desir'd that Oedipus should be pittied, he should have made him a better man. He forgot that Sophocles had taken care to shew him in his first entrance a just, a merciful, a successful, a Religious Prince, and in short a Father of his Country: instead of these, he has drawn him suspicious, designing, more anxious of keeping the Theban Crown, than solicitous for the safety of his People's Holder'd by Theseus, condemn'd by Dirce, and scarce maintaining a second part in his own Tragedy. This was an Error in the first Conception; and therefore never to be mended in the second or the third. He introduc'd a greater Heroe than Oedipus himself; for when Theseus was once there, that Companion of Hercules must yield to none: The Poet was oblig'd to furnish him with Business, to

The Preface.

make him an Equipage suitable to his Dignity; and by following him too close, to lose his other King of Branford in the Crowd. Seneca on the other side, as if there were no such thing as Mute to be minded in a Play, is always running after pompous Expressions, pointed Sentences, and Philosophical Notions, more proper for the Study than the Stage: The French-man followed a wrong Scent; and the Roman was absolutely at cold Hunting. All we cou'd gather out of Corneille, was, that an Episode must be, but not his way: And Seneca supply'd us with no new Hint, but only a Relation which he makes of his Tiresias raising the Ghost of Laius, which is here perform'd in view of the Audience; the Rites and Ceremonies so far his, as he agreed with Antiquity, and the Religion of the Greeks; but he himself was beholden to Homer's Tiresias in the Odysses for some of them; and the rest have been collected from Heliodore's Ethiopiques, and Lucan's Eriotho. Sophocles, indeed, is admirable every where; and therefore we have follow'd as close as possibly we cou'd: But the Athenian Theatre (whether more perfect than ours, is not now disputed) had a Perfection differing from ours. You see there in every Act a single Scene; (for two at most) which manage the Business of the Play; and after that succeeds the Chorus, which commonly takes up more Time in singing, than there has been employ'd in speaking. The principal Person appears almost constantly through the Play; but the inferior Parts seldom above once in the whole Tragedy. The Conduct of our Stage is much more difficult, where we are oblig'd never to lose any considerable Character which we have once presented. Custom likewise has obtain'd, that we must form an Under-Plot of Second Persons, which must be depending on the First; and their By-Walks must be like those in a Labyrinth, which all of 'em lead into the great Parterre; or like so many several Lodging-Chambers, which have their Out-lets into the same Gallery. Perhaps, after all, if we cou'd think so, the ancient Method, as 'tis the easiest, is also the most natural, and the best: For Variety, as 'tis manag'd, is too often subject to breed Distraction; and while we wou'd please too many ways, for want of Art in the Conduct, we please in none. But we have given you more already than was necessary for a Preface; and for ought we know, may gain no more by our Instructions; than that politick Nation is like to do, who have taught their Enemies to fight so long, that at last they are in a Condition to invade them.

Dramatis Personæ.

Oedipus	Mr. Betterton.
Adrastus	Mr. Smith.
Creon	Mr. Sanford.
Tiresias	Mr. Harris.
Hæmon	Mr. Crosby.
Alcander	Mr. Williams.
Diocles	Mr. Norris.
Pyracmon	Mr. Boman.
Phorbas	Mr. Gillo.
Dymas	
Ægeon	
Ghost of Lajus	Mr. Williams.

WOMEN.

Jocasta	Mrs. Betterton.
Eurydice	Mrs. Lee.
Manto	Mrs. Evans.

Priests, Citizens, Attendants, &c.

SCENE, THEBES.

PRO.

PROLOGUE.

WHEN Athens all the Grecian State did guide,
 And Greece gave Laws to all the World beside,
 Then Sophocles with Socrates did sit,
 Supreme in Wisdom one, and one in Wit:
 And Wit from Wisdom differ'd not in those,
 But as 'twas Sung in Verse, or said in Prose.
 Then Oedipus on Crowned Theatres,
 Drew all admiring Eyes and listening Ears;
 The pleas'd Spectator shouted every Line,
 The Noblest, Manliest, and the Best Design!
 And every Critick of each learned Age
 By this just Model has reform'd the Stage.
 Now, should it fail, (as Heav'n avert our Fear!)
 Damn it in Silence, lest the World should hear.
 For were it known this Poem did not please,
 You might set up for perfect Salvages:
 Your Neighbours would not look on you as Men:
 But think the Nation all turn'd Picts agen.
 'Faith, as you manage Matters, 'tis not fit
 You should suspect your selves of too much Wit,
 Drive not the Jest too far, but spare this Piece:
 And, for this once, be not more Wise than Greece.
 See twice! Do not sell-meth to Darning fall.
 Like true born Britains, who ne'er think at all:
 Pray be advis'd; and though at Mons you won,
 On pointed Cannon do not always run.
 With some respect to ancient Wits proceed;
 You take the four first Councils for your Creed.
 But when you lay Tradition wholly by,
 And on the private Spirit alone rely,
 You turn Fanaticks in your Poetry.
 If notwithstanding all that we can say,
 You needs will have your pen worths of the Play:
 And come resolv'd to Damn, because you pay.
 Record it, in memorial of the Fact,
 The first Play bury'd since the Woollen Act.

OEDIPUS.

OEDIPUS.

ACT I. SCENE *Thebes.*

The Curtain rises to a plaintive Tune, representing the present Condition of Thebes; Dead Bodies appear at a distance in the Streets; some faintly go over the Stage, others drop.

Enter Alcander, Diocles, Pyracmon.

Alc. **M**ethinks we stand on Ruines; Nature shakes
About us; and the Universal Frame
So loose, that it but wants another push
To leap from off its Hinges.

Dioc. No Sun to chear us, but a bloody Globe
That rowls above; a bald and beamless Fire;
His Face o're-grown with Scurf: the Sun's sick too;
Shortly he'll be an Earth.

Pyr. Therefore the Seasons
Lye all confus'd; and by the Heavens neglected,
Forget themselves: Blind Winter meets the Summer
In his Mid-way, and, seeing not his Livery,
Has driv'n him headlong back: And the raw damps
With flaggy Wings fly heavily about,
Scattering their Pestilential Colds and Rhumes
Through all the lazy Air.

Alc. Hence Murrains follow,
On bleating Flocks, and on the lowing Herds:
At last, the Malady
Grew more domestick, and the faithful Dog
Dy'd at his Master's Feet.

Dioc. And next his Master:
For all those Plagues which Earth and Air had brooded;
First on inferiour Creatures try'd their force;
And last they seiz'd on Man.

Pyr. And then a thousand deaths at once advanc'd,
And every Dart took place; all was so sudden,
That scarce a first Man fell; one but began
To wonder, and straight fell a wonder too;
A third, who stoop'd to raise his dying Friend,
Dropt in the pious Act. Heard you that groan? *[Groan without.]*

Dioc. A Troop of Ghosts took flight together there:

Now

Now Death's grown riotous, and will play no more
For single Strakes, but Families and Tribes;
How are we sure we breath not now our last,
And that next minute,
Our Bodies cast into some common Pit,
Shall not be built upon, and overlaid
by half a People?

Alc. There's a Chain of Causes
Link'd to Effects; invincible Necessity
That what e're is, could not but so have been;
That's my security.

To them enter Creon.

Creon. So had it need, when all our Streets lie cover'd
With dead and dying Men,
And Earth exposes Bodies on the Pavements
More than she hides in Graves!
Betwixt the Bride and Bridegroom have I seen
The Nuptial Torch do common Offices
Of Marriage and of Death.

Dioc. Now, *Oedipus*,
(If he return from War, our other Plague)
Will scarce find half he left, to grace his Triumphs.

Pyr. A feeble Pzan will be sung before him.
Alc. He would do well to bring the Wives and Children
Of Conquer'd *Argians* to renew his *Thebes*.

Creon. May Funerals meet him at the City Gates
With their detested Omen.

Dioc. Of his Children.

Creon. Nay, though she be my Sister, of his Wife.

Alc. Oh that our *Thebes* might once again behold

A Monarch *Theban* born!

Dioc. We might have had one.

Pyr. Yes, had the People pleas'd.

Creon. Come, y're my Friends:

The Queen my Sister, after *Laius* Death,

Fear'd to lie single; and supply'd his place

With a young Successor.

Dioc. He much resembles

Her former Husband too.

Alc. I always thought so.

Pyr. When twenty Winters more have grizzl'd his black Locks

He will be a very *Laius*.

Creon. So he will.

Mean time she stands provided of a *Laius*

More young and vigorous too, by twenty Spriggs.

These Women are such cunning Parveyors!

Mark where their Appetites have once been pleas'd

The same resemblance in a younger Lover;
Lies brooding in their Fancies the same Pleasures,
And urges their remembrance to desire.

Disc. Had merit, not her dotage, been consider'd,
Then *Creon* had been King; but *Oedipus*,
A stranger!

Creon. That word Stranger, I confess,
Sounds harshly in my Ears.

Disc. We are your Creatures,
The People prone, as in all general Ills,
To sudden Change; the King in Wars abroad,
The Queen a Woman, weak and unregarded;
Eurydice the Daughter of dead *Law*,
A Princess young and beauteous, and unmarried;
Methinks from these disjointed Propositions
Something might be produc'd.

Creon. The Gods have done
Their part, by sending this commodious Plague;
But oh the Princess! her hard Heart is shut
By Adamantine Locks against my Love.

Alc. Your claim to her is strong; you are betroth'd.
Pyr. True! in her Nonage.

Alc. But that let's remov'd.
Disc. I heard the Prince of *Agae*, your *Adoption*

When he was hostage here

Creon. Oh name him not! the bane of all my hopes
That hot-brain'd, head long Warriors, has the Charms
Of youth, and somewhat of a lucky Rashness,
To please a Woman yet more Fool than he,
That thoughtless Sex is caught by outward form
And empty noise, and loves it self in Man.

Alc. But since the War broke out about our Frontiers
He's now a Foe to *Thebes*!

Creon. But is not so to her; she, she appears
Once more I'll prove my Fortune: you insinuate
Kind thoughts of me into the multitude
Lay load upon the Court; gull 'em with Freedom
And you shall see 'em rose their Tails, and add
As if the Breeze had stung 'em.

Disc. We'll about it. [Enter *Alcander*, *Dionides*, *Pyrramon*,
Eurydice, &c.]

Creon. Hail, Royal Maid, thou bright *Eurydice*,
A lavish Planet reign'd when thou wert born;
And made thee of such kindred mind to Heaven,
Thou seem'st more Heaven's than ours.

Eur. Cast round your Eyes
Where late the Streets were so thick, down Men,
Like

Like *Cadmus's* Brood they justify for the Passage;
Now look for those erected heads, and see 'em
Like Pebbles paving all our publick Ways:
When you have thought on this, answer this,
If these be hours of Courtship?

Creon. Yes, they are;
For when the Gods destroy so fast, 'tis time
We should renew the Race.

Enryd. What, in the midst of horror!
Creon. Why not then?
There's the more need of Comfort.

Enryd. Impious *Creon*!
Creon. Unjust *Enrydice*! can you accuse me
Of love, which is Heaven's Precept, and not fear
That Vengeance, which you say pursues our Crimes,
Should reach your Perjuries?

Enryd. Still th' old Argument.
I bad you cast your Eyes on other Men,
Now cast 'em on your self: think what you are.

Creon. A Man.
Enryd. A Man!
Creon. Why doubt you? I'm a Man.

Enryd. 'Tis well you tell me so, I should mistake you;
For any other part our whole Creation,
Rather than think you Man: hence from my sight
Thou Poyson to my Eyes.

Creon. 'Twas you first poyson'd mine; and methinks
My Face and Person shoud' not make you sport.

Enryd. You force me, by your importunities,
To shew you what you are.

Creon. A Prince, who loves you
And since your Pride provokes me, worth your Love
Ev'n at his highest value.

Enryd. Love from thee?
Why love renounc'd thee ere thou saw'st the sight:
Nature her self start back when thou wert born,
And cry'd the Work's not mine;
The Midwife stood again, and when she saw
Thy Mountain back, and thy distorted legs,
Thy face it self,

Half minted with the Royal stamp of Man,
And half o'recome with beast, stood doubting long,
Whole right in thee were more;
And knew not if to burn thee in the flames,
Were not the holier work.

Creon. Am I to blame, if Nature threw my Body
In so perverse a mold? yet when she call

Her envious hand upon my supple joints,
Unable to resist, and rump'd am
On heaps in their dark lodging, to revenge
Her bungled work, she stamp'd my mind more false
And as from Chaos, huddled and deform'd,
The Gods struck fire, and lighted up the Lamps
That beautifie the Sky, so she inform'd
This ill-shap'd Body with a daring Soul:
And making less than Man, she made me more.

Euryd. No, thou art all one Error: Soul and Body;
The first young tryal of some unskill'd Pow'r
Rude in the making Art, and Ape of Jove.
Thy crooked mind within, hunch'd out thy back,
And wander'd in thy limbs, to thy own kind
Make love, if thou canst find it in the World;
And seek not from our Sex to raise an offspring,
Which, mingled with the rest, would temper the Gods
To cut of Human Kind.

Creon. No; let 'em leave
The Argian Prince for you: that Enemy
Of Thebes has made you false, and break the Vows
You made to me.

Euryd. They were my Mother's Vows,
Made when I was at Nurse.

Creon. But hear me, Maid;
This Blot of Nature, this deform'd loath'd *Crown*
Is Master of a Sword, to reach the Blood
Of your young *Milton*, spoil the Gods' sinew-work,
And stab you in his heart.

Euryd. This when thou doest,
Then may'st thou still be curst with loving me;
And, as thou art, be still unpiqued, loath'd
And let his Ghost—— No, let his Ghost have rest;
But let the greatest, fiercest, foulest Fury
Let *Creon* haunt himself.

Creon. 'Tis true, I am
What she has told me, an offence to fight:
My Body opens inward to my Soul,
And lets in day to make my Vices seen,
By all discerning Eyes, but the blind vulgar;
I must haste e'er *Odipus* return,
To snatch the Crown and her: for I still love
But love with malice; as an angry Cat
Snarls while he feeds; so will I seize and slouch
The hunger of my Love on this proud Beauty,
And leave the scraps for Slaves.

Enter Tiresias, leaning on a Staff, and led by his Daughter Man to.
 What makes this blind prophetick Fool abroad?
 Word his Apollo had him, she's too holy
 For Earth and me: 'Tis his walk, and seek
 My popular Friends.

Tiresias. A little farther, yet a little farther;
 Thou wretched Daughter of a dark old Man;
 Conduct my weary steps; and thou who see'st
 For me and for thy self, beware thou tread not
 With impious steps upon dead Corps.
Now Ray.
 Methinks I draw more open, vital Air,
 Where are we?

Man to. Under Covert of a Wall
 The most frequented once, and noisy part
 Of Thebes, now midnight silence reigns even here;
 And grass untrodden springs beneath our feet.

Tir. If there be nigh this place a Sunny bank,
 There let me rest a while: a Sunny bank!
 Alas how can it be, where no Sun shines?
 But a dim winking Taper in the Skies,
 That nods, and scarce holds up his drowne head
 To glimmer through the damps.

*[A noise within, follow, Follow, fol-
 low, A Creon, A Creon, A Creon.]*
 Hark! a tumultuous noise, and Creon's name
 Thrice echoed.

Man. Fly, the Tempest drives this way.

Tir. Whither can Age and Blindness take their flight?
 If I could fly, what could I suffer worse,
 Secure of great Ill!

[Noise again, Creon, Creon, Creon.]

Enter Creon, Diocles, Alcander, Pyracmon, followed by his Guards.

Creon. I thank ye, Countrymen; but must refuse
 The honours you intend me, they're too great;
 And I am too unworthy; think again,
 And make a better Choice.

Cit. Think twice! I ne'er thought twice in all my life
 That's double work.

2 Cit. My first word is always my second; and therefore I'll have
 No second word; and therefore once again I say, A Creon.

All. A Creon, a Creon, a Creon.

Creon. Yet here me, Fellow Citizens.

Dioc. Fellow Citizens! there was a word of kindness.

Alc. When did Oedipus salute you by that familiar name?

Cit. Never, never; he was too proud.

Creon. Indeed he could not, for he was a stranger;

But under him our Thebes is half destroyed.

Forbid it Heav'n the residue should perish

Under a Theban born.

'Tis true, the Gods might send this Plague among you,
Because a Stranger rul'd. But what of that?
Can I redress it now?

3. *Cit.* Yes, you or none.

'Tis certain that the Gods are angry with us
Because he reigns.

Creon. Oedipus may return: You may be ruin'd.

1. *Cit.* Nay, if that be the matter, we are ruin'd already.

2. *Cit.* Half of us that are here present, were living Men but
Yesterday; and we that are absent do but drop and drop,
And no Man knows whether he be dead or living. And
Therefore, while we are sound and well, let us satisfy our
Consciences, and make a new King.

3. *Cit.* Ha, if we were but worthy to see another Coronation!
And then, if we must die, we'll go merrily together.

All. To the Question, to the Question.

Dirce. Are you content *Creon* shall be your King?

All. A *Creon*, a *Creon*, a *Creon*.

Thir. Hear me, ye *Thebans*: And thou *Creon*, hear me.

1. *Cit.* Who's that would be heard? We'll hear no Man:
We can scarce hear one another.

Thir. I charge you by the Gods to hear me.

2. *Cit.* Oh, 'tis *Apollo's* Priest; we must hear him: 'Tis the old blind
Prophet, that sees all things.

3. *Cit.* He comes from the Gods too; and they are our Betters:
And therefore in good Manners we must hear him. Speak, Prophet.

2. *Cit.* For coming from the Gods, that's no great matter:
They can all say that. But he's a great Scholar, he can make
Almanacks and he were put to it; and therefore I say, hear him.

Thir. When angry Heav'n scatters its Plagues among you,
Is it for nought, ye *Thebans*? Are the Gods
Unjust in punishing? Are there no Crimes
Which pull this Vengeance down?

1. *Cit.* Yes, yes; No doubt, there are some Sins stirring.
That are the Cause of all.

3. *Cit.* Yes, There are Sins, or we should have no Taxes.

2. *Cit.* For my part, I can speak it with a safe Conscience,
I ne'er sin'd in all my Life.

1. *Cit.* Nor I.

3. *Cit.* Nor I.

2. *Cit.* Then we are all justified: The Sin lies not at our Doors.

Thir. All justified alike, and yet all guilty.

Were every Man's False-dealing brought to light;

His Envy, Malice, Lying, Perjuries,

His Envy, Malice, Lying, Perjuries,

His Weights and Measures, th'other Man's Extortions,

With what Face could you tell offended Heav'n,

You had not sin'd?

2. *Cit.*

2 *Cit.* Nay, if these be Sins, the Case is alter'd: For my part, I never Thought any thing but Murder had been a Sin.

Tir. And yet, as if all these were less than nothing, You add Rebellion to 'em. Impious *Thibon*! Have you not sworn before the Gods, to serve And to obey this *Oedipus*, your King, By publick Voice elected? Answer me, If this be true.

2 *Cit.* This is true: But it's a hard World, Neighbours, If a Man's Oath must be his Master.

Creon. Speak *Diocles*: All goes wrong.

Dioc. How are you Traytors, Country-men of *Thibes*? This holy Sir, who presses you with Oaths, Forgets your first. Were you not sworn before To *Lajus*, and his Blood?

All. We were, we were.

Dioc. While *Lajus* has a lawful Successor, Your first Oath still must bind: *Eurydice* is Heir to *Lajus*; let her marry *Creon*: Offended Heav'n will never be appeas'd, While *Oedipus* pollutes the Throne of *Lajus*, A Stranger to his Blood.

All. We'll no *Oedipus*, no *Oedipus*.

1 *Cit.* He puts the Prophet in a Mouse-hole.

2 *Cit.* I knew it would be so: The last Man ever speaks the best Reason.

Tir. Can Benefits thus die? Ungrateful *Thibons*! Remember yet, when, after *Lajus's* Death, The Monster *Sphinx* laid your rich Country waste, Your Vineyards spoil'd, your labouring Oxen slew, Your selves, for fear, mew'd up within your Walks; She, taller than your Gates, o'er-look'd your Town; But when she rais'd her Bulk to sail above you, She drove the Air around her, like a Whirl-wind, And shaded all beneath; till stooping down, She clap'd her Leathern Wing against your Towers, And thrust out her long Neck, ev'n to your Doors.

Dioc. Alc. Pyr. We'll hear no more.

Tir. You durst not meet in Temple, To invoke the Gods for Aid; the proudest he Who leads you now, then crow'd like a dar'd Lark: This *Creon* shook for fear, The Blood of *Lajus* cruddled in his Veins; Till *Oedipus* arriv'd, Call'd by his own high Courage, and the Gods; Himself to you a God: Ye offer'd him Your Queen and Crown; (but what was then your Crown?) And Heav'n authoriz'd it by his Success: Speak then; Who is your lawful King?

All. 'Tis Oedipus.

Tir. 'Tis Oedipus, your King more lawful
That yet you dream; for something still there lies
In Heav'n's dark Volume, which I read through Mists:
'Tis great, prodigious; 'tis a dreadful Birth
Of wondrous Fate; and now, just now disclosing.
I see, I see how terrible it dawns!
And my Soul sickens with it.

Cri. How the God shakes him!

Tir. He comes! he comes! Victory! Conquest! Triumph!
But, Oh! Guiltless and Guilty: Murder! Parricide!
Incest! Discovery! Punishment——'tis ended,
And all your Sufferings o'er.

A Trumpet within; Enter Hemon.

Hem. Rouze up, ye Thebans; tune your *In Pace*.
Your King returns; the Argians are o'ercome;
Their Warlike Prince in single Combat taken,
And led in Bands by God-like Oedipus.

All. Oedipus, Oedipus, Oedipus.

Creon. Furies confound his Fortune!——
Haste, all haste,
And meet with Blessings our victorious King;
Decree Processions; bid new Holy-days;
Crown all the Statues of our Gods with Garlands;
And raise a Brazen Column, thus inscrib'd,
To Oedipus, now twice a Conqueror; Deliverer of his Thebes.
Trust me, I weep for Joy to see this Day.

[*Aside:*
To them.

Tir. Yes, Heav'n knows how thou weep'st:—— Go Country men,
And, as you us'd to supplicate your Gods,——
So meet your King, with Bays, and Olive-branches:
Bow down, and touch his Knees, and beg from him
An End of all your Woes; for only he
Can give it you.

[*Exit Tiresias, the People following.*
Enter Oedipus in Triumph; Adrastus Prisoner; Dymas, Train.

Creon. All hail, great Oedipus;
Thou mighty Conqueror, hail; welcome to Thebes,
To thy own Thebes, to all that's left of Thebes:
For half thy Citizens are swept away,
And wanting to thy Triumphs;
And we, the happy Remnant, only live
To welcome thee, and die.

Oedipus. Thus Pleasure never comes sincere to Man;
But lent by Heaven, upon hard Usury;
And while *Jove* holds us out the Bowl of Joy,
E'er it can reach our Lips, 'tis dash'd with Gall:
By some Left-handed God. O mournful Triumph!
O Conquest gain'd abroad, and lost at home!

• Argos

O *Argos*, now rejoyce, for *Thebes* lies low;
Thy slaughter'd Sons now smile, and think they won,
When they can count more *Theban* Ghosts than theirs.

Adrast. No; *Argos* mourns with *Thebes*; you temper'd so
Your Courage while you fought, that Mercy seem'd
The Manlier Virtue, and much more prevail'd.
While *Argos* is a People, think your *Thebes*
Can never want for Subjects; Every Nation
Will crowd, to serve where *Oedipus* commands.

Creon to *Ham*: How mean it shews, to fawn upon the Victor!

Ham. Had you beheld him fight, you had said otherwise: No,
Come, 'tis brave Beating in him, not to envy
Superiour Virtue.

Oed. This, indeed, is Conquest;
To gain a Friend like you. Why were we Foes?

Adrast. Cause we were Kings; and each disdain'd an Equal.
I fought to have it in my power to do
What thou hast done; and so to use my Conquest,
To shew thee, Honour was my only Motive.
Know this, that were my Army at thy Gates,
And *Thebes* thus waste, I would not take the Gift,
Which, like a Toy, drop'd from the Hands of Fortune;
Lay for the next Chance-come.

Oed. Embracing. No more Captive,
But Brother of the War: 'Tis much more pleasant,
And safer, trust me, thus to meet thy Love,
Than when hard Gantlets clench'd our Warlike Hands,
And kept 'em from soft Use.

Adrast. My Conqueror.

Oed. My Friend! That other Name keeps Enmity alive;
But longer to detain thee, were a Crime
To Love, and to *Eurydice*; go free;
Such Welcome as a ruin'd Town can give,
Expect from me; the rest let her supply.

Adrast. I go without a Blush, though conquer'd twice;
By you, and by my Princess. [Exit *Adrastus*.

Creon aside. Then I am conquer'd thrice; by *Oedipus*,
And her, and even by him, the Slave of both.
Gods, I am beholding to you for making me your Image;
Would I could make you mine. [Exit *Creon*.

Enter the People with Branches in their Hands, holding them up,
and kneeling: Two Priests before them.

Oed. Alas, my People!
What means this speechless Sorrow, down-cast Eyes,
And lifted Hands? Is there be one among you,
Whom Grief has left a Tongue, speak for the rest.
A *Pr.* O Father of thy Country!

To thee these Knees are bent, these Eyes are lifted,
As to a visible Divinity.

A Prince, on whom Heav'n rarely might repose
The Business of Mankind: For Providence
Might on thy Bosom sleep secure,
And leave her Task to thee.

But where's the Glory of thy former Acts?
Ev'n that's destroy'd when none shall live to speak it.

Millions of Subjects shall thou have, but mute.

A People of the Dead; a crowded Desert:

A Midnight-silence at the Noon of Day.

Oed. Oh! Were our Gods as ready with their Pity,

As I with mine, this Prefence should be throng'd

With all I left alive; and my sad Eyes

Not search in vain for Friends, whose promis'd Sight

Flatter'd my Toyls of War.

Pr. Twice our Deliverer!

Oed. Nor are now your Vows

Address'd to one who sleeps:

When this unwelcome News first reach'd my Ears,

Dymas was sent to *Delphos*, to enquire

The Cause and Cure of this Contagious Ill;

And is this Day return'd: But since his Message

Concerns the Publick, I refus'd to hear it,

But in this general Presence: Let him speak.

Dymas. A dreadful Answer from the hallow'd Urn,

And sacred *Troves* did the Priests give,

In these mysterious Words,

The Oracle. *Shed in a cursed Hour, by cursed Hand,*

Blood-Royal unreveng'd, but cur'd the Land.

When Lajus's Death is expiated well,

Your Plague shall cease: The rest let Lajus tell.

Oed. Dreadful indeed! Blood, and a King's Blood too!

And such a King; and by his Subjects shed!

(Else, by this Curse on *Thebes*!) No wonder then

If Monsters, Wars and Plagues revenge such Crimes.

If Heav'n be just, its whole Artillery

All must be empty'd on us: Not one Bolt

Shall err from *Thebes*; but more be call'd for, more!

New-moulded Thunder, of a larger Size,

Driv'n by whole *Jove*. What! Touch Anointed Pow'r!

Then Gods beware; *Jove* would himself be next,

Could you but reach him too.

Pr. We mean the sad Remembrance.

Oed. Well you may.

Worse than a Plague infects you: You're devoted

To Mother Earth, and to th' Infernal Pow'rs:

Hell has a Right in you : I thank you Gods,
That I'm no *Theban* born : How my Blood cruddles !
As if this Curse touch'd me ! and touch'd me nearer
Than all this Presence ! — Yes, 'tis a King's Blood ;
And I, a King, am ty'd in deeper Bonds
To expiate this Blood : But where, from whom,
Or how must I atone it ? Tell me, *Thebans*,
How *Lajus* fell ; for a confus'd Report
Pass'd through my Ears, when first I took the Crown ;
But full of Hurry, like a Morning-Dream,
It vanish'd in the Business of the Day.

1 *Pr.* He went in private forth, but thinly follow'd ;
And ne'er return'd to *Thebes*.

Oed. Nor any from him ? Came there no Attendant ?
None to bring News ?

2 *Pr.* But one ; and he so wounded,
He scarce drew Breath to speak some few faint Words.

Oed. What were they ? Something may be learnt from thence.

1 *Pr.* He said, a Band of Robbers watch'd their Passage,
Who took Advantage of a narrow Way,
To murder *Lajus* and the rest ; himself
Left too for dead.

Oed. Made you no more Enquiry,
But took this bare Relation ?

2 *Pr.* 'Twas neglected :
For then the Monster *Sphinx* began to rage ;
And present Cares soon buried the remote :
So was it hush'd, and never since reviv'd.

Oed. Mark, *Thebans*, mark !
Just then the *Sphinx* began to rage among you ;
The Gods took hold ev'n of th'offending Minute,
And dated thence your Woes : Thence will I trace 'em.

1 *Pr.* 'Tis just thou shouldst.

Oed. Hear then this dread Imprecation, hear it :
'Tis laid on all, not any one exempt :

Bear witness, Heav'n ! avenge it on the Perjur'd.

If any *Theban* born, if any Stranger

Reveal this Murder, or produce its Author,

Ten Antique Talents be his just Reward :

But if for Fear, for Favour, or for Hate,

The Murder he conceal, the Curse of *Thebes*

Fall heavy on his Head : Unite our Plagues,

Ye Gods, and place 'em there : From Fire and Water,

Converse, and all things common, be he banish'd.

But for the Murderers self, unsound by Man,

Find him, ye Pow'rs Celestial and Infernal,

And the same Fate, or worse than *Lajus* met.

Let

Let be his Lot : His Children be accur'd ;
His Wife and Kindred, all of his be curs'd.
Both Pr. Confirm it, Heav'n.

Enter Jocasta, attended by Women.

Joc. At your Devotions ! Heav'n succeed your Wishes ;
And bring th' Effect of these your pious Pray'rs
On you, and me, and all.

Pr. Avert this Omen, Heav'n !

Oed. O fatal Sound ! Unfortunate *Jocasta* !
What hast thou said ! An ill Hour hast thou chosen
For these fore-boding words : Why, we were cursing.

Joc. Then may that Curse fall only where you laid it.

Oed. Speak no more,
For all thou say'st is ominous : We were cursing ;
And that dire Imprecation hast thou fasten'd
On *Thebes*, and thee, and me, and all of us.

Joc. Are then my Blessings turn'd into a Curse ?
O unkind *Oedipus* ! My former Lord
Thought me his Blessing : Be thou like my *Laius*.

Oed. What, yet again ! The third time hast thou curs'd me ?
This Imprecation was for *Laius*'s Death ;
And thou hast wish'd me like him.

Joc. Horror seizes me !

Oed. Why dost thou gaze upon me ? Prithee, Love,
Take off thy Eye ; it burdens me too much.

Joc. The more I look, the more I find of *Laius* :
His Speech, his Gait, his Action ; nay, his Frown ;
(For I have seen it,) but ne'er bent on me.

Oed. Are we so like ?

Joc. In all things but his Love.

Oed. I love thee more : So well I love, Words cannot speak how well ;
No pious Son e'er lov'd his Mother more,
Than I my dear *Jocasta*.

Joc. I love you too
The self-same way : And when you chid, methought
A Mother's Love start up in your Defence,
And bad me not be angry : Be not you :
For I love *Laius* still as Wives should love ;
But you more tenderly, as part of me :
And when I have you in my Arms, methinks
I hush my Child asleep.

Oed. Then we are blest :
And all these Curses sweep along the Skies,
Like empty Clouds, but drop not on our Heads.

Joc. I have not joy'd an Hour since you departed,
For publick Miseries, and for private Fears ;
But this blest Meeting has repay'd 'em all.

Good Fortune that comes seldom, comes more welcome.
All I can wish for now, is your Consent
To make my Brother happy.

Oed. How, *Jason*?

Joc. By Marriage with his Niece *Emydie*.

Oed. Uncle and Niece! they are too near, my Love:

'Tis too like Incest; 'tis Offence to Kind;
Had I not promis'd, were there no *Adrosten*,
No Choice but *Creon* left her of Mankind,
They shou'd not marry: Speak no more of it;
The Thought disturbs me.

Joc. Heav'n can never bless

A Vow so broken, which I made to *Creon*:

Remember he's my Brother.

Oed. That's the Bar:

And she thy Daughter: Nature would abhor

To be forc'd back again upon her self,

And, like a Whirl-pool, swallow her own Streams.

Joc. Be not displeas'd; I'll move the Suit no more.

Oed. No, do not; for, I know not why, it shakes me

When I but think on Incest: Move we forward

To thank the Gods for my Success, and pray

To wash the Guilt of Royal Blood away.

[*Exeunt Omnes.*]

ACT II. SCENE I.

An open Gallery. A Royal Bed-Chamber being suppos'd behind.

The Time, Night. Thunder, &c.

Hæmon, Alcander, Pyrramon.

Hæm. SURE 'tis the End of all things! Fate has torn

The Lock of Time off, and his Head is now

The gally Ball of round Eternity!

Call you these Peals of Thunder, but the Yawn

Of bellowing Clouds? by *Jove*, they seem to me

The World's last Groans; and those vast Sheets of Flame

Are its last Blaze! The Tapers of the Gods,

The Sun and Moon, run down like Waxen Globes;

The shooting Stars end all in purple Jellies,

And Chaos is at hand.

Pyrr. 'Tis Midnight, yet there's not a *Theban* sleeps,

But such as ne'er must wake. All crowd about

the Palace, and implore, as from a God,

Help of the King; who, from the Battlement,

By

By the red Lightning's glare, Hell's fiery
Atones the angry Powers.

Ham. Ha! Pyracmon, look!
Behold, *Alexander*, from yon' Wall
The perfect Figures of a Man and Woman
A Scepter bright with Gems in each right hand,
Their flowing Robes of dazzling purple made,
Distinctly yonder in that point they stand,
Just West: a bloody red stains all the place;
And see, their Faces are quite hid in Clouds.

Py. Clusters of golden Stars hang over their Heads,
And seem so crowded, that they swirl upon 'em
All dark at once their baleful influence,
In leaking fire.

Alc. Long-bearded Comets stick,
Like flaming Porcupines, to their left sides,
As they would shear their Quills into their hearts.

Ham. But seal the King, and Queen, and all the Court,
Did ever Day or Night shew ought like this?

The Scene draws, and discovers the Prodiges.
Enter Oedipus, Jocasta, Eurydice, Adrastus, all coming forward with Amazement.

Ord. Answer, you Pow'r's Divine; spare all this nobles
This rack of Heav'n; and speak your fatal pleasure,
Why breaks yon dark and dusky Orb away?
Why from the bleeding Womb of monstrous Night,
Burst forth such Myriads of sportive Stars?
Ha! my *Jocasta*, look! the Silver Moon!
A settling Crimson stains her beauteous Face!
She's all o're Blood! and look, behold again,
What mean the mystick Heav'n's in Journeys on?
A vast Eclipse darkens the labouring Planets;
Sound there, sound all our Instruments of War,
Clarions and Trumpets, Silver, Brass, and Iron,
And beat a thousand Drums to help her Labour.

Adr. 'Tis vain; you see the Prodiges continue;
Let's gaze no more, the Gods are Humorous.

Ord. Forbear, rash Man — Once more I ask your pleasure
If that the glow-worm light of human Reason
Might dare to offer at immortal Knowledge,
And cope with Gods, why all this Storm of Nature?
Why do the Rocks split, and why roils the Sea?
Why these Portents in Heav'n, and Plagues on Earth?
Why yon' Gigantick Forms, Ethereal Monsters?
Alas! Is all this but to fright the Dwaits,
Which your own hands have made, then be it so,
Or if the Fates resolve some Expiation

For

For murder'd Lais: Hark ye, hear ye, Gods!
Hear me this protest: Hear this groaning Land,
Save Innocent Lais: I grant Death
Do this, and lo I thank you more than men
To meet your swiftest and severest anger,
Shoot all at once, and strike me to the Center.

*The Cloud draws that veil'd the heads of the Figures to the Skie, and
shows 'em Crown'd, with the Names of Oedipus and Jocasta written
above in great Characters of Gold.*

Adr. Either I dream, and all my cooler Senses

Are vanish'd with that Cloud that sets away fog to the winds

Or, just above those two Majestick Heads,

I see, I read distinctly in large Gold,

Oedipus and Jocasta.

Alc. I read the same.

Adr. 'Tis wonderful; yet ought not Man to wade

Too far in the vast deep of Destiny [*Thunder; and the Prodigious vanish.*]

Joc. My Lord, my Oedipus, why gaze you now,

When the whole Heaven is clear, as if the Gods

Had some new Monsters made? will you not turn,

And bless your People, who devour each word

You breathe?

Oed. It shall be so.

Yes, I will die, O *Thibes*, to save thee!

Draw from my Heart my Blood with more content

Than e'er I wore thy Crown. Yet, O *Jocasta*!

By all the indentments of miraculous

By all our Languishings, our Fears in Pleasure,

Which oft have made us wonder; hear I swear

On thy fair hand, upon thy Breast I swear

I cannot call to mind, from budding Childhood

To blooming Youth, a Crime by me committed,

For which the awful Gods should doom my Death.

Joc. 'Tis not you, my Lord,

But he who murder'd *Lais* from the Land:

Were you, which is impossible, the Man,

Perhaps my Ponyard first should drink your Blood;

But you are Innocent, as your *Jocasta*.

From Crimes like those, which made me violent

To save your life, which you unjust would lose:

Nor can you comprehend with deepest thought,

The horrid Agony you call me in,

When you resolv'd to die.

Oed. Is't possible?

Joc. Alas! why start you so? Her filial grief

Who saw her Children slaughter'd all at once,

Was dull to mine: Methinks I should have made

My

My bosom bare against the armed God,
To save my *Oedipus*.

Oed. I pray, no more.

Joc. You've silenc'd me, my Lord.

Oed. Pardon me, dear *Jocasta*;

Pardon a heart that sinks with Sufferings,
And can but vent it self in sighs and murmurs;
Yet to restore my peace, I'll find him out;
Yes, yes, you Gods! you shall have ample vengeance
On *Laius*'s Murderer. O, the Traitor's Name!
I'll know't, I will: Art shall be conjur'd for it,
And Nature all unravel'd.

Joc. Sacred Sir

Oed. Rage will leave way, and 'tis but *Jocasta*; I'll fetch him,
Tho' lodg'd in Air upon a Dragon's Wing,
Tho' Rocks should hide him: Nay he should be dragg'd
From Hell, if Charms can hurry him along:
His Ghost shall be by. *Enter Tiresias* Pow'r,
(*Tiresias*, that rules all beneath the Moon)
Confin'd to flesh, to suffer Death once more,
And then be plang'd in his first fires again.

Enter Creon.

Cre. My Lord,

Tiresias attends your Pleasure.

Oed. Haste and bring him in.

O, my *Jocasta*, *Eurydice*, *Adrastus*,
Creon, and all ye *Thebans*, now the end
Of Plagues, of Madoes, Murders, Prodigies,
Draws on: This Battel of the Heav'ns and Earth
Shall by his Wisdom be reduc'd to peace.

Enter Tiresias, leaning on a Staff, led by his Daughter Manto, followed by other Thebans.

O thou, whose most aspiring Mind
Knowest all the Business of the Courts above,
Open'st the Closets of the Gods, and dar'st
To mix with *Jove* himself and Fate at Council;
O Prophet, answer me, declare aloud
The Traitor who conspir'd the Death of *Laius*,
Or be they more, who from malignant Stars
Have drawn this Plague that blasts unhappy *Thebes*.

Tir. We must no more than Fate commissions us
To tell, yet something, and of moment, I unfold,
If that the God would wake: I feel him now,
Like a strong Spirit charm'd into a Tree,
That leaps, and moves the Wood without a Wind:
The rous'd God, as all this while he lay
Intomb'd alive, starts and dilates himself:

He struggles, and he tears my aged Trunk
 With holy Fury, my old Arteries burst,
 My rivell'd Skin,
 Like Parchment, crackles at the hollow'd fire;
 I shall be young again: *Alas!* my Daughter,
 Thou hast a Voice that might have sav'd the Bard
 Of *Thebes*, and forc'd the raging Bacchante
 With lifted Prongs, to listen to the strain:
 O charm this God, this Fury in my Bosom,
 Lull him with tuneful Notes, and artful Strings,
 With pow'ful strains: *Mambo*, my lovely Child,
 Sooth the unruly God-head to be mild.

SONG to Apollo.

Pheebus, God belov'd by Men,
At thy dawn, every Beast is rous'd to his Den;
At thy setting, all the Birds of thy absence complain,
And we die, all die till the morning comes again,
 Pheebus, God belov'd by Men,
 Idol of the Eastern Kings,
 Awful as the God who sings
 His Thunder round, and the Lightning wings;
 God of Songs, and Orphean Strings,
 Who to this mortal Bosom brings
 All harmonious heavenly Things:
 Thy dreamy Prophet to revive,
 Ten thousand thousand forms before him drive;
 With Chariots and Horses all's his wake him,
 Concessions, and Furies, and Prophecy shake him,
 Let him tell it in groans, tho' he bend with the Load,
 Tho' he burst with the weight of the terrible God.

Tyr. The Wretch, who shed the blood of old *Labdacides*,
 Lives, and is great;
 But cruel greatness never was long:
 The first of *Lajus's* blood his Life did seize,
 And urg'd his Fate,
 Which else had lasting been and strong
 The Wretch, who *Lajus's* kill'd, must bleed, or fly;
 Of *Thebes*, consum'd with Plagues, in ruins lie.

Oed. The first of *Lajus's* blood? pronounce the person;
 May the God roar from thy Prophetic mouth,
 That even the dead may start up, to behold
 Name him, I say, that most accursed Wretch,
 For by the Stars he dies:

Speak,

Speak, I command thee;
By *Phobus*, speak! for sudden Death's his doom:
Here shall he fall, bleed on this very spot;
His Name, I charge thee once more, speak.

Tir. 'Tis lost.
Like what we think can never have remembrance;
Yet of a sudden's gone beyond the Clouds.

Oed. Fetch it from thence; I'll have't, where-e'er it be.

Creon. Let me intreat you, sacred Sir, be calm;
And *Creon* shall point out the great Offender.

'Tis true, respect of Nature might injoin

My silence at another time; but oh,

Much more the pow'r of my eternal Love!

That, that should strike me dumb: yet *Thebes*, my Country—

I'll break through all, to succour thee, poor City

O, I must speak.

Oed. Speak then, if ought thou knowest:
As much thou seem'd to know, delay no longer.

Cre. O Beauty! O illustrious Royal Maid!

To whom my Vows were ever paid till now,

And with such modest, chaste, and pure affection.

The coldest Nymph might read 'em without blushing;

Art thou the Murtheress then of wretched *Laisus*?

And I, must I accuse thee, O my Tears!

Why will you fall in so abhor'd a Cause?

But that thy beauteous, barbarous, hand destroy'd

Thy Father (O monstrous act!) both Gods

And Men at once take notice.

Oed. Eurydice!

Euryd. Traytor, go on; I scorn thy little malice,

And knowing more my perfect Innocence,

Than Gods and Men, then how much more than thee,

Who art their opposite, and form'd a Liar,

I thus disdain thee! Thou once didst talk of Love;

Because I hate thy love,

Thou dost accuse me.

Adr. Villain, inglorious Villain

And Traytor, double damn'd, who durst blaspheme

The spotless Virtue of the brightest Beauty;

Thou dy'st: nor shall the sacred Majesty, *[Draws and wounds him.*

That guards this place, preserve thee from my Rage.

Oed. Disarm 'em both: Prince, I shall make you know

That I can tame you twice. Guards, seize him.

Adr. Sir,

I must acknowledge in another Cause

Repentance might abash me; but I glory

In this, and smile to see the Traytor's Blood.

Oed. Creon, you shall be satisfied at full.
Cre. My hurt is nothing, Sir; but I appeal
To wise *Tiresias*, if my accusation
Be not most true. The first of *Laius* blood
Gave him his Death: Is there a Prince before her?
Then she is faultless, and I ask her Pardon.
And may this Blood ne'er cease to drop, O *Thebes*,
If pity of thy Sufferings did not move me
To shew the Cure which Heaven itself prescribed.

Eur. Yes, *Thebans*, I will die to save your lives,
More willingly than you can with my Fate;
But let this good, this wise, this holy Man
Pronounce my Sentence: For to fall by him,
By the vile breath of that prodigious Villain,
Would sink my Soul, tho' I should die a Martyr.

Adr. Unhand me, Slaves. O mightiest of Kings,
See at your Feet a Prince not us'd to kneel;
Touch not *Eurydice*, by all the Gods,
As you would save your *Thebes*, but take my life:
For, should she perish, Heaven would heap Plagues on Plagues,
Rain Sulphur down, hurl kindled bolts
Upon your guilty Heads.

Cre. You turn to Gallantry, what is but Justice.
Proof will be easie made. *Adrastus* was
The Robber who bereft th' unhappy King
Of life; because he flatly had deny'd
To make so poor a Prince his Son-in-Law:
Therefore 'twere fit that both should perish.

Theb. Both let both die.

All Theb. Both, both, let 'em die.

Oed. Hence you wild Herd! For your Ring-leader here,
He shall be made an Example. *Haemon*, take him.

Theb. Mercy, O Mercy.

Oed. Mutiny in my Presence!
Hence, let me see that busy Face no more.

Tir. Thebans, what Madness makes you drunk with rage?
Enough of guilty Death's already acted:
Fierce *Creon* has accus'd *Eurydice*,
With Prince *Adrastus*; which the God reproves
By inward Checks, and leaves their Fate in doubt.

Oed. Therefore instruct us what remains to do,
Or suffer; for I feel a sleep like Death
Upon me, and I sigh to be at rest.

Tir. Since that the Powers Divine refuse to clear
The mystic Deed, I'll to the Grove of Furies;
There I can force th' infernal Gods to shew
Their horrid Forms;

Each

Each trembling Ghost shall rise,
And leave their grisly King without a waiter :
For Prince *Adrastus* and *Eurydice*,
My life's engag'd, I guard 'em in the Fane;
Till the dark Mysteries of Hell are done.
Follow me, Princess; *Thebans*, all to rest.
O, *Oedipus*, to morrow — but no more,
If that thy wakeful Genius will permit,
Indulge thy Brain this Night with softer slumbers :
To morrow, O to morrow! — sleep, my Son;
And in prophetic Dreams thy Fate be shown. [Ex. *Tires.* *Adrast.*

Euryd. Manto, *Thebans*. *Mament* *Oed.* *Jocast.* *Creon.* *Pyr.*
rac. *Ham.* *Alcan.*

Oed. To bed, My Fair, my Dear, my best *Jocasta*.
After the toils of War, 'tis wondrous strange
Our loves should thus be dash'd. One moment's thought,
And I'll approach the Arms of my belov'd.

Joc. Consume whole Years in care, so now and then
I may have leave to feed my famish'd Eyes
With one short passing glance, and sigh my Vows :
This, and no more, my Lord, is all the passion
Of languishing *Jocasta*. [Ex.]

Oed. Thou softest, sweetest of the World! good night,
Nay, she is beauteous too; yet, mighty Love,
I never offer'd to obey thy Laws,
But an unusual chillness came upon me;
An unknown hand still check'd my forward joy,
Dash'd me with blushes, tho' no light was near;
That ev'n the act became a violation.

Pyr. He's strangely thoughtful.

Oed. Hark! who was that? Ha! *Creon*, didst thou call me?

Creon. Not I, my gracious Lord, nor any here.

Oed. That's strange! methought I heard a doleful Voice,
Cry'd *Oedipus*. The Prophet bad me sleep;
He talk of Dreams and Visions, and to morrow!
I'll muse no more on't, come what will or can.
My thoughts are clearer than unclouded Stars;
And with those thoughts I'll rest. *Creon*, good night. [Ex. *with* *Ham.*

Cre. Sleep seal your Eyes, Sir, eternal sleep.
But if he must sleep and wake again, O all
Tormenting Dreams, wild horrors of the Night,
And Hags of Fancy wing him through the air :
From precipices hurl him headlong down;
Charybdis roar, and Death be set before him.

Alc. Your Curses have already ta'en effect;
For he looks very lad.

Cor. May he be rooted, where he stands for ever;

His Eye-balls never move, brows be unbent,
His Blood, his Entrails, Liver, Heart and Bowels
Be blacker than the Place I wish him, Hell.

Py. No more : you tear your self, but vex not him.
Methinks 'twere brave this Night to force the Temple,
While blind *Tiresias* conjures up the Fiends,
And pass the time with nice *Enigmas*.

Alc. Try promises, and threats, and if all fall
Since Hell's broke loose, why should not you be mad?
Ravish, and leave her dead with her *Sister*.

Cra. Were the Globe mine, I'd give a Province hourly
For such another thought. Lust, and Revenge?
To stab at once the only Man I hate;
And to enjoy the Woman whom I love!
I ask no more of my auspicious Stars.
The rest as Fortune please; so but this Night
She play me fair, why let her turn for ever.

Enter Hamon.

Hamon. My Lord, the troubled King is gone to rest;
Yet, e'er he slept, commanded me to clear
The Antichambers : none must dare be near him.

Creon. *Hamon*, you do your Duty; ——— *Thunder.*
And we obey. — The night grows yet more dreadful!
'Tis just that all retire to their Devotions;
The Gods are angry : but to morrow's dawn,
If Prophets do not lye, will make all clear.

Oedipus Enters, walking asleep in his shirt, with a Dagger in his
right hand, and a Taper in his left.

O. d. O, my *Jocasta* ! 'tis for this the wet
Starv'd Soldier lies all night on the cold ground;
For this he bears the Storms
Of Winter Camps, and freezes in his Arms :
To be thus circled, to be thus embrac'd
That I could hold thee ever! — *Ha* where art thou?
What means this melancholly light, that seems
The gloom of glowing Embers?
The Curtain's drawn; and see she's here again!
Jocasta? *Ha*! what, fall'n asleep so soon?
How fares my Love? this Taper will inform me.
Ha! Lightning blast me, *Thunder*
Rivet me ever to *Prometheus* Rock,
And Vultures gnaw out my incestuous heart,
By all the Gods! my Mother *Merope*?
My Sword, a Dagger; *Ha*! who waits there? Slaves,
My Sword : what, *Hamon*, dar'st thou, Villain, stop me?
With thy own Ponyard pe ish. *Ha* : who's this?

Or isn't a Change of Death? *Enter Jocasta, attended with Lights, in a Night Gown.*
 New Murder; thou hast slain thyself: Incest and Parricide, thy Father's Murderer:
 O'er thy Infernal Flame: Now all is dark,
 All blind and dismal: Most triumphant Mischiefs!
 And now, while thus I stalk about the Room,
 I challenge Fate to find another Wretch
 Like Oedipus.

Thunder, &c.

Oed. Night, Horror, Death, Confusion, Hell and Furies!
 Where am I? O *Jocasta*, let me hold thee
 Thus to my Bosom, Age; let me grasp thee:
 All that the hardest temper'd weather & Fleth,
 With fiercest Humane Spirit inspir'd can dare
 Or do, I dare: But, O you Powers, this was
 By infinite degrees too much for Man.
 Methinks my deaf'd Ears
 Are burst; my Eyes, as if they had been knock'd
 By some tempestuous Hand, shoot flashing Fire:
 That Sleep should do this!

Joc. Then my Fears were true.
 Methought I heard a Voice, and yet I doubted,
 Now roaring like the Ocean, when the Winds
 Fight with the Waves: now in a still small Tone
 Your dying Accents fell, as racking Ships,
 After the dreadful Yell, sink murmuring down,
 And bubble up a Noise.

Oed. Trust me, thou fairest, best of all thy Kind,
 None e'er in Dreams was tortur'd so before:
 Yet what most shocks the niceness of my Temper,
 Ev'n far beyond the killing of my Father,
 And my own Death, is, that this horrid Sleep
 Dash'd my sick Fancy with an Act of Incest:
 I dreamt, *Jocasta*, that thou wert my Mother;
 Which, though impossible, so damps my Spirits,
 That I cou'd do a Mischiefs on my self,
 Lest I should sleep, and dream the like again.

Joc. O *Oedipus*, too well I understand you!
 I know the Wrath of Heav'n, the Care of *Thor*,
 The Cries of its Inhabitants, War's Toils,
 And Thousand other Labours of the State,
 Are all refer'd to you, and ought to take you
 For ever from *Jocasta*.

Oed. Life of my Life, and Treasure of my Soul!
 Heav'n knows I love thee.

Joc. Oh! You think me vile,
 And of an inclination to ignominy,

Exit

That I must hide me from your eyes for ever.
Be witness, Gods; and strike me dead,
If an immodest Thought, or too bold Speech,
Inflam'd my Breast, since first our Loves were lighted.

Oed. Oh, rise; and add not, by thy cruel Kindness,
A Grief more sensible than all my Torments.
Thou think'st my Dreams are forg'd; But, By thy self,
the greatest Oath, I swear, they are most true.

But be they what they will, I here dismiss 'em:
Be gone *Chimera's* to your Mother Clouds.
Is there a Fault in us? Have we not search'd

The Womb of Heav'n, examin'd all the Entrails
Of Birds and Beasts, and pur'd the Prophet's Art?
Yet what avails? He, and the Gods together,
Seem, like Physicians, at a loss to help us.

Therefore, like Wretches that have linger'd long,
We'll snatch the strongest Cordial of our Love,
To bed, my Fair.

Ghost within. Oedipus!

Oed. Ha! Who calls?
Didst thou not hear a Voice?

Joc. Alas! I did.

Ghost. Jocasta!

Joc. O my Love, my Lord, support me!

Oed. Call lowder, till you bust your Airy Forms:

Rest on my Hand. Thus arm'd with Innocence,
I'll face these babbling *Demons* of the Air:

In spite of Ghosts, I'll on.

Though round my Bed the Furies plant their Charms,

I'll break 'em, with *Jocasta* in my Arms:

Clas'd in the Folds of Love, I'll wait my Doom:

And act my Joys, though Thunder shake the Room.

ACT III. SCENE I.

Cre. **T**IS better not to be, than to be unhappy.
Dir. What mean you by those Words?
Cre. 'Tis better not to be, than to be *Creon*.

A thinking Soul is Punishment enough:
But when tis great, like mine, and wretched too,
Then every Thought draws Blood.

Dir. You are not wretched.

Cre.

Cre. I am : My Soul's ill married to my Body :
I wou'd be young, be handfom, be belov'd :
Con'd I but breath my self into a *Phoenix* !

Dis. You rave : Call home your Thoughts : they will not stay out

Cre. I prithee, let my Soul take Air a while :
Were she in *Oedipus*, I were a King :

Then I had kill'd a Monster, gain'd a Battle,

And had my Rival Prisoner : Brave, brave Actions !
Why have not I done these ?

Dis. Your Fortune hinder'd.

Cre. There's it : I have a Soul to do all this :
But Fortune will have nothing done that's great,

But by young, handfom Fools : Body and Brawn

Do all her Work : *Heracles* was a Fool :

And streight grew famous ; a mad boy was a Fool :

Nay worse, a Woman's Fool :

Fool is the Stuff, of which *Hamlet* makes a Hero :

Dis. A Serpent ne'er becomes a lying Dragon,
Till he has eat a Serpent.

Cre. Goes it there ?

I understand thee ; I must kill *Adrastus* :

Dis. Or not enjoy your Mistress :

Eurydice and he are Prisoners here :

But will not long be so : this Tell-tale Ghost

Perhaps, will clear 'em both.

Cre. Well, 'tis resolv'd.

Dis. The Princess walks this Way :

You must not meet her,

Till this be done :

Cre. I must.

Dis. She hates your Sight :

And more since you accus'd her.

Cre. Urge it not.

I cannot stay to tell thee my Design :

For she's too near.

Enter Eurydice.

How, Madam, were your Thoughts employ'd ?

Enr. On Death, and thee.

Cre. Then were they not well sort'd : Life and me

Had been the better Match.

Enr. No ; I was thinking

On two the most detested things in Nature ;

And they are Death and thee.

Cre. The Thought of Death, to one near Death, is dreadful :

Oh, 'tis a fearful thing to be no more

Or if to be, to wander after Death :

To walk, as Spirits do, in Brahes all Day

And when the Darkness comes, to glide in Paths
That lead to Graves; and in the silent Vault,
Where lies your own pale Shroud, to hover o'er it,
Striving to enter your forbidden Corps;
And often, often, vainly smother your Ghost
In your lifeless Lips:

Then, like a lone, brighten'd Traveller,
Shut out from Lodging, shall your Ghost be call'd
By whistling Winds, whose every blast will take
Your tender Form to Atoms.

Eur. Must I be this thin Being? and thus wander?
No Quiet after Death?

Cre. None: You must leave
This beautiful Body; all this Youth and Freedom
Must be no more the Object of Desire,
But a cold Lump of Clay;

Which then your discontented Ghost will leave,
And loath its former Lodging,
This is the best of what comes after Death,
Even to the best.

Eur. What then shall be thy Lot?
Eternal Torments, Baths of boiling Sulphur,
Vicissitudes of Fires, and then of Frosts,
And an old Guardian Ghost, who is thou art,
To hollow in thy Ears at every Lash,
This for *Eurydice*, these for her *Adressus*.

Cre. For her *Adressus*?

Eur. Yes; for her *Adressus*:
For Death shall ne'er divide us. Death! What's Death?

Dio. You seem'd to fear it.

Eur. But I more fear *Creon*:
To take that hunch back'd Monster in my Arms,
Th' Excrement of a Man.

Dio. to *Cre.* See what you've gain'd.

Eur. Death only can be dreadful to the Bad:
To Innocence, 'tis like a Bug-bear, dress'd
To fright'n Children: Pull out off his Masque,
And he'll appear a Friend.

Cre. You talk too lightly
Of Death and Hell. Let me inform you better.

Eur. You best can tell the News of your own Country.

Dio. Nay, now you are too sharp.

Eur. Can I be so to one who has accus'd me
Of Murder, and of Parricide?

Cre. You provok'd me.

And yet I only did thus far accuse you,
As next of Blood to *Lajus*: Be advise,
And you may live.

Eur.

Eur. The Means?

Cre. 'Tis offer'd you.

The Fool *Adrastus* has accus'd himself.

Eur. He has indeed, to take the Guilt from me.

Cre. He says he loves you; if he does, 'tis well:
He ne'er could prove it in a better time.

Eur. Then Death must be his Recompence for Love!

Cre. 'Tis a Fool's just Reward;

The Wife can make a better Title of Life:

But 'tis the Young Man's Pleasure, his Ambition:

I grudge him not that Favour.

Eur. When he's dead,
Where shall I find his Equal?

Cre. Every where.

Fine empty things, like him,

The Court swarms with 'em.

Fine fighting things; in Camps they are so common,

Crows feed on nothing else: Plenty of Fools;

A Glut of 'em in *Thebes*.

And Fortune still takes care they shou'd be seen:

She places 'em aloft, o' th' topmost Spoke

Of all her Wheel: Fools are the daily Work

Of Nature; her Vocation: If the form

A Man, she loses by't; 'tis too expensive;

'Twould make ten Fools: A Man's a Prodigy.

Eur. That is, a *Creon*. O thou black Detractor,

Who spitt'st thy Venom against Gods and Man!

Thou Enemy of Eyes!

Thou who lov'st nothing, but what nothing loves;

And that's thy self! Who hast conspired against

My Life and Fame, to make me loath'd by all,

And only fit for thee.

But for *Adrastus*'s Death, good Gods! his Death!

What Curse shall I invent?

Dis. No more; he's here.

Eur. He shall be ever here.

He wou'd give his Life, give up his Fame——

Enter Adrastus.

If all the Excellence of Womankind

Were mine;—— No, 'tis too little all for him.

Were I made up of endless, endless Joys——

Adrast. And so thou art.

The Man who loves like me,

Wou'd think ev'n Infamy, the worst of Ills,

Were cheaply purchas'd, were thy Love the Prize:

Uncrown'd, a Captive, nothing left but Honour;

'Tis the last thing a Prince shou'd throw away;

But when the Storm grows loud, and threatens Love,
Throw ev'n that over-board, for Love's the Jewel;
And last it must be kept.

Cre. to Dio. Work him, be sure.

To Rage; he's passionate:

Make him th' Aggressor.

Dio. O false Love! False Honour!

Cre. Dissembled both, and false!

Adrast. Dar'st thou say thus to me?

Cre. To you! Why, what are you, that I should fear you?

I am not *Lajus*: Hear me, Prince of *Argos*;

You give what's nothing, when you give your Honour;

'Tis gone; 'tis lost in Battel. For your Love,

Vows made in Wine are not so false as that;

You kill'd her Father; you confess'd you did:

A mighty Argument to prove your Passion to the Daughter!

Adrast. aside. Gods! Must I bear this Brand, and not retort
The Lye to his foul Throat!

Dio. Basely, you kill'd him.

Adrast. aside. Oh, I burn inward; my Blood's all o' fire!

Alcides; when the poyson'd Shirt sat closest,

Had but an Ague-fit to this my Fever.

Yet, for *Eurydice*, ev'n this I'll suffer,

To free my Love—— Well then, I kill'd him basely.

Cre. Fairly, I'm sure you cou'd not.

Dio. Nor alone.

Cre. You had your Fellow-Thieves about you, Prince;

They conquer'd, and you kill'd.

Adrast. aside. Down, swelling Heart!

'Tis for thy Princess all.—— O my *Eurydice*!

Eurydice to him. Reproach not thus the Weakness of my Sex;

As if I cou'd not bear a shameful Death.

Rather than see you burden'd with a Crime,

Of which I know you free.

Cre. You do ill, Madam,

To let your head-long Love triumph o'er Nature.

Dare you defend your Father's Murderer?

Eur. You know he kill'd him not.

Cre. Let him say so.

Dio. See, he stands mute.

Cre. O Pow'r of Conscience, ev'n in wicked Men!

It works, it stings, it will not let him utter

One Syllable, one, no to clear himself

From the most base, detested, horrid Act

That e'er cou'd stain a Villain, not a Prince.

Adrast. Ha! Villain!

Dio. Eccho to him, Groves; Cry Villain.

Adrast.

Adrast. Let me consider: Did I murder *Laius*
Thus like a Villain?

Cre. Best revoke your Words,
And say, you kill'd him not.

Adrast. Not like a Villain: Pristhee change me that,
For any other Lye.

Dis. No, Villain, Villain.

Cre. You kill'd him not! Proclaim your Innocence;
Accuse the Princess: So I knew 'twou'd be.

Adrast. I thank thee, thou instruct'st me:
No matter how I kill'd him.

Cre. aside. Could again.

Eur. Thou who usurp'st the sacred Name of Conscience,
Did not thy own declare him innocent?

To me declare him so? The King shall know it.

Cre. You will not be believ'd, for I'll forswear it.

Eur. What's now thy Conscience?

Cre. 'Tis my Slave, my Drudge, my supple Glove;
My Upper Garment, to put on, throw off;

As I think best: 'Tis my obedient Conscience.

Adrast. Infamous Wretch!

Cre. My Conscience shall not do me the ill Office

To save a Rival's Life: When thou art dead,

(As dead thou shalt be, or be yet more base

Than thou think'st me,

By forfeiting her Life, to save thy own.—)

Know this, and let it grate thy very Soul,

She shall be mine; (she is, if Vows were binding:)

Mark me; the Fruit of all thy Faith and Passion,

Ev'n of thy foolish Death, shall all be mine.

Adrast. Thine, say'st thou, Monster?

Shall my Love be thine?

Oh, I can bear no more!

Thy cunning Engines have with Labour rais'd

My heavy Anger, like a mighty Weight,

To fall, and push thee dead.

See here thy Nuptials; see, thou rash *Ixion*,

Thy promis'd *Juno* vanish'd in a Cloud;

And in her room avenging Thunder rolls

To blast thee thus.— Come both.—

Cre. 'Tis what I wish'd:

Now see whose Arm can launch the surer Bolt,

And who's the better *Jove*.—

Eur. Help; Murder, help!

Enter Hæmon and Guards, run betwixt them, and beat down their Swords.

Hæm. Hold, hold your impious Hands: I think the Furies

To whom this Grove is hallow'd, have inspir'd you:

Now, by my Soul, the holiest Earth of *Thebes*
 You have profan'd with War. Nor Tree, nor Plant
 Grows here, but what is fed with Magick Juice ;
 All full of Humane Souls, that cleave their Barks,
 To dance at Midnight, by the Moon's pale Beams :
 At least Two Hundred Years these reverend Shades
 Have known no Blood, but of black Sheep and Oxen,
 Shed by the Priest's own Hand, to *Perserpine*.

Adrast. Forgive a Stranger's Ignorance : I knew not
 The Honours of the Place.

Hem. Thou, *Creon*, didst.

Not *Oedipus*, were all his Foes here lodg'd,
 Durst violate the Religion of these Groves,
 To touch one single Hair ; but must, unarm'd,
 Parle, as in Truce, or surlily avoid
 What most he long'd to kill.

Cre. I drew not first ;
 But in my own Defence.

Adrast. I was provok'd
 Beyond Man's Patience : All Reproach cou'd urge,
 Was us'd, to kindle one not apt to bear.

Hem. 'Tis *Oedipus*, not I, must judge this Act ;
 Lord *Creon*, you and *Diocles* retire ;
Tiresias, and the Brotherhood of Priests,
 Approach the place : None at these Rites assist,
 But you th' Accus'd ; who, by the Mouth of *Lajus*,
 Must be absolv'd, or doom'd.

Adrast. I bear my Fortune.

Eur. And I provoke my Trial.

Hem. 'Tis at hand :

For, see, the Prophet comes, with Vervain crown'd ;
 The priests with Yeugh ; a venerable Band :

We leave you to the Gods. [*Exit Hamon, with Creon and Diocles.*]

*Enter Tiresias, led by Manto : The Priests follow ; all cloathed in
 long black Habits.*

Tir. Approach, ye Lovers ;
 Ill-fated Pair ! whom seeing not, I know :
 This Day your kindly Stars in Heav'n were joynd ;
 When, loe, an envious Planet interpos'd,
 And threaten'd both with Death. I fear, I fear.

Eur. Is there no God so much a Friend to Love,
 Who can control the Malice of our Fate ?
 Are they all deaf ? Or have the Giants Heav'n ?

Tir. The Gods are just. —

But how can Finite measure Infinite ?

Reason ! alas, it does not know it self !

Yet Man, vain Man, wou'd with this short lin'd Plummet,

Fathom

Fathom the vast Abyss of Heav'n by Justice.
 Whatever is, is in its Cause just;
 Since all things are by Fate—But perblind Man
 Sees but a part o' th' Chain, the nearest Links;
 His Eyes not carrying to that equal Beam
 That poizes all above.

Eur. Then we must die!

Tir. The Danger's imminent this Day.

Adrast. Why then there's one Day leis for Humane Ills;
 And who would mean himself for suffering that,
 Which in a Day must pass? Something, or nothing—
 I shall be what I was again, before
 I was *Adrastus*. —

Penurious Heav'n! Canst thou not add a Night
 To our one Day? Give me a Night with her,
 And I'll give all the rest.

Tir. She broke her Vow,
 First made to *Creon*. But the Time calls on;
 And *Laius's* Death must now be made more plain.
 How loth I am to have recourse to Rites
 So full of Horrour, that I once rejoyce
 I want the use of Sights! —

1 Pr. The Ceremonies stay.

Tir. Chuse the darkest part o' th' Grove,
 Such as Ghosts at Noon-day love.
 Dig a Trench, and dig it nigh
 Where the Bones of *Laius* lie:
 Altars rais'd, of Turf or Stone,
 Will th' Infernal Pow'rs have none.
 Answer me, if this be done?

All Pr. 'Tis done.

Tir. Is the Sacrifice made fit?
 Draw her backward to the Pit:
 Draw the barren Heyser back;
 Barren let her be, and black.
 Cut the curled Hair that grows
 Full betwixt her Horns and Brows:
 And turn your Faces from the Sun.
 Answer me, if this be done?

All Pr. 'Tis done.

Tir. Pour in Blood, and Blood like Wine,
 To Mother Earth, and *Proserpine*:
 Mingle Milk into the Stream;
 Fealt the Ghosts that love the Steam:
 Snatch a Brand from Funeral-pile;
 Toss it in to make you boil:

And turn your faces from the Sun.

Answer me, if all be done?

All Pr. All is due.

Feet of Thunder, and flashes of Lightning;

then lighting down the Stage.

Manto. O, what Laments are those?

Tir. The Groans of Ghosts, that cleave the Earth with pain:

And heave it up: they pant and stick half way.

The Stage wholly darkned.

Manto. And now a sudden darkness covers all
True genuine Night: Night added to the Groves:

The Fogs are blown full in the Face of Heaven.

Tir. Am I but half obey'd: Infernal Gods,

Must you have Musick too? then tune your Voices,

And let 'em have such sounds as Hell ne'er heard,

Since Orpheus brib'd the Shades.

Musick first. Then Sing.

*{ This to be set
through.*

1. Hear, ye fullen Pow'rs below;

Hear, ye takers of the dead.

2. You that boiling Cauldrons blow,

You that scum the molten Lead.

3. You that Pinch with red-hot Tongue;

1. You that drive the trembling Hosts

Of poor, poor Ghosts,

With your sharpen'd Prongs

2. You that thrust 'em off the brim;

3. You that plunge 'em when they swim:

1. Till they drown;

Till they go

On a row

Down, down, down,

Ten thousand thousand thousand Fadoms low.

Chorus. Till they drown, &c.

1. Musick for a while

Shall your Cares beguile:

Wondering how your Pains were eas'd.

2. And disdaining to be pleas'd;

3. Till Alecto free the dead

From their eternal hands;

Till the Snakes drop from her head,

And whip from out her hands.

1. Come away,

Do not stay,

But obey

While we play,

For Hell's broke up, and Ghosts have only day.

Chorus. Come away, &c.

[A flash

[A flash of Lightning: the Stage is made bright; and the Ghosts are seen passing betwixt the Trees.]

1. *Lajus!* 2. *Lajus!* 3. *Lajus!*

1. *Hear!* 2. *Hear!* 3. *Hear!*

Tis. Hear and appear.

By the Fates that doom'd thy blood,

Cho. Which we serve.

Tis. By the Fates that doom'd thy blood,

Cho. Which we serve.

Tis. By the Fates that doom'd thy blood,

Cho. Which we serve.

Three times three.

Tis. By Hell's Hell flames,

By the Stygian waves,

And by Demogorgon's name

At which Ghosts quake,

Hear and appear.

[The Ghost of Lajus rises arm'd in his Chariot, as he was slain. And behind his Chariot sit the three whom he Murder'd with him.]

Ghost of Lajus. Why hast thou drawn me from my Pains below,

To suffer worse above: to see the Day,

And *Thebes* more hated? Hell is Heav'n to *Thebes*.

For pity send me back, where I may hide,

In willing night, this ignominious head:

In Hell I shun the publick Scorn; and then

They hunt me for their Sport, and hoot me as I fly:

Behold ev'n now they grin at my gor'd side,

And chatter at my wounds.

Tis. I pity thee:

Tell but why *Thebes* is for thy Death accur'd;

And I'll unbind the Charm.

Ghost. O spare my shame.

Tis. Are these two innocent?

Ghost. Of my Death they are.

But he who holds my Crown, Oh, must I speak!

Was doom'd to do what Nature most abhors:

The Gods foresaw it; and forbade his King

Before he yet was born. I broke their Law,

And cloath'd with Flesh his pre-existing Soul,

Some kinder Pow'r, too weak for destiny,

Took pity, and indu'd his new-form'd Maits

With Temperance, Justice, Prudence, Fortitude,

And every Kingly Virtue: but in vain.

For Fate, that sets his hood-wink'd to the World,

Perform'd its Work by his mistaking hands.

Asks thou who murder'd me? *Thou Oedipus!*

Who

Who baist my Bed with incest? *Oedipus*;
 For whom then are you curs'd, but *Oedipus*?
 He comes; the Parricide: I cannot bear him:
 My Wounds ake at him: On his Murd'rous breath
 Venoms my airy substance: hence with him,
 Banish him; sweep him out; the Plague he bears
 Will blast your gates, and smite his seed with mine.
 From *Thebes*, my Throne, my Bed, my House be driven.
 Do you forbid him Earth, and I'll forbid him Heaven. [*Chorus descends.*]

Enter Oedipus, Creon, Jocasta, &c.

Oed. What's this? Methought some pestilential blast
 Strook me just entering; and some unseen hand
 Struggled to push me backward? tell me why
 My hair stands bristling up, why my flesh trembles!
 You stare at me! then Hell has been unringing yet,
 And some lag Fiend yet lingers in the Grave.

Tir. What Omen saw'st thou entering?

Oed. A young Stork,

That bore his aged Parent on his back;
 Till weary with the weight, he shook him off,
 And peck'd out both his Eyes.

Alc. Oh, *Oedipus*!

Eur. Oh, wretched *Oedipus*!

Tir. O, Fatal King!

Oed. What mean this Exclamations of my Name?

I thank the Gods, no secret thoughts reproach me:
 No; I dare challenge Heaven to turn me outward,
 And shake my Soul quite empty in your sight.
 Then wonder not that I can bear unmov'd
 These fix'd regards, and silent threats of Eyes:
 A generous fierceness dwells with innocence,
 And conscious Vertue is allow'd some pride.

Tir. Thou know'st not what thou say'st.

Oed. What mutters he! tell me, *Eurydice*:

Thou shak'st; thy Soul's a Woman. Speak, *Adressus*;
 And boldly, as thou met'st my Arms in fight;
 Dar'st thou not speak, why then 'tis bad indeed:
 Fireless, thee I summon by the Priest hood,
 Tell me what news from Hell, where *Leir* points,
 And who's the guilty head?

Tir. Let me not answer.

Oed. Be dumb then, and betray thy native Soil
 To farther Plagues.

Tir. I dare not name him to thee.

Oed. Dar'st thou converse with Hell, and greet thou *Phar*;
 An humane name?

Tir. Urge me no more to tell a thing, which known
 Wou

Would make thee more unhappy: 'twill be said
Thou I am silent

Old. Old and Old, I have been many years
Art Author or Accomplish of this business
And thou'lt be the Justice, which by publick law
Thou hast incur'd

Tir. O if the guilt were mine, I should be dead
It were not half so great: I have been many years
Thou'lt say, thou art guilty: thy own Conscience
Falls heavy on thy self.

Old. Speak this again: I have been many years
But speak it to the Winds when they are howling
Or to the raging Seas, they'll hear thee
And sooner will believe.

Tir. Then hear me Heaven, I have been many years
For blushing, thou hast seen it: hear me Earth,
Whole hollow Womb could not contain this Murder
But cast it back to light: and then Hell, hear me,
Whole own black Seal has stamp'd this bloody truth:
Oedipus murder'd *Laius*.

Old. Rot the tongue, I have been many years
And blasted be the mouth that spoke that *Lies*
Thou blind of Sight, but thou more blind of Heart
To each each others hand

Tir. Thou shalt know too, I have been many years
Old. Why seek I truth from thee, I have been many years
Remember I have been many years

The smiles of Courtiers, and the frowns of Kings
The Tradefins Oaths, and mourning of the Kings
Are Truths to what Priests say: I have been many years
O why has Priests say: I have been many years
And yet to be believed: I have been many years

Tir. Thou canst not kill me, I have been many years
As 'twas to kill thy Father, I have been many years
And beget Sons, thy Brothers.

Old. Riddles, Riddles, I have been many years
Tir. Thou art my self, I have been many years
Obscure Enigma, which which thou art

Thou shalt be found and lost, I have been many years
Old. Impossible! I have been many years
Adrastus. Speak and is thou not a King, I have been many years

Whole Royal word is sacred, clear my Father's name, I have been many years
Adr. Would I could see thee, I have been many years
Old. Ha, wilt thou not see that Plutus, I have been many years

Of Lying mount to Kings: can they be tainted?
Then truth is lost on Earth.
Cre. The Chorus is gone, I have been many years

Adrastus

Adrastus is his Oracle, and his Son:—
The pious Mother, but *Adrastus* Organ.

Oed. The plain the *Oracle* has said to me:—
Oed. And turn the guilt on me:—

Oed. O, honest *Cress*,—
Ear. Hear me.

Cres. She's brid'd to save her Lover's life:—
Adr. If *Oedipus*—

Cres. Hear him not:—
Adr. Then hear these holy men.

Cres. Priests, Priests, all brid'd, all Priests:—
Oed. *Adrastus* I have—

The malice of a vanguard queen has said:—
Adr. If Easy and not Truth—

Oed. I'll hear no more: away with him:—
[*Hemion takes him by the hand:—*

To *Tir.* Why should'st thou—
So old, and yet so—
And gain so short a time:—

Tir. So short a time as I have yet to live:—
Exceeds thy pointed hour: remember *Lajus*:—

No more; if e'er we meet again,—
In mutual darkness; we shall feel before—
To reach each others hand; Remember—

[*Exit Hemion:—*
Remember *Lajus*! that's the burden:—
Murder and incest! but—

My Soul starts in me:—
Stands to her weapons; takes the first—
To guard me from such Crimes:—

Then I walk'd sleeping; in some fright—
My Soul then stole my Body:—
And brought me back to—

It cannot be ev'n this remotest way:—
But some dark hint would juggle forward now:—
And goad my memory:—

Jae. Why are you thus disturb'd?—
Oed. Why would'st thou think it?—
No less than Murder?—

Jae. Murder? what of Murder?—
Oed. Is Murder then no more? add—
And incest; bear—

Jae. Alas!—
Oed. How poor a pity is Alas,—
For two such Crimes!—

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Murder and incest! but—

Jos. Oh no: the most sacred, plain
One who abhor'd a lie?

Ord. Then what's the matter?

He charges me with Murder!

I did not hear him speak: they say he said

The Priest, *Adrian* and *Barabas*

Of Murdering *Lazarus*!

Has old *Tigellus* practis'd a lie?

Jos. What Trade?

Ord. Why this foretelling Trade

Jos. For many years

Ord. Has he before this time

Jos. Never

Ord. Have you e'er this in mind

Jos. Often: but still in vain

Ord. I am satisfy'd

Then 'tis an infant eye: but

The Oracle takes place Before the Priest

The blood of *Lazarus* was to murder

I'm not of *Lazarus*'s blood

Jos. Ev'n Oracles

Are always doubtful, and are often false

Lazarus had one, which never was fulfill'd

Nor ever can be now!

Ord. And what foretold it?

Jos. That he should have a Son by me

The Murderer of his Father?

A Son was born: but to prevent this Crime

The wretched Infant of a guilty Fate

Bore'd through his mother's side

On a bleak Mountain

The King himself

And found a different Fate

Where three ways meet

And this the Faith we owe

Ord. Say'st thou, woman?

By Heav'n thou hast wak'd

That shakes my very Soul!

Jos. What, new

Ord. Methought thou wast

This Murder was on *Lazarus*

Where three ways meet

Jos. So common false reports

Ord. Wou'd it had been

Jos. Why, good my Lord?

Ord. No question:

'Tis busy time with me

Say where, where you are come from?

Joc. Mean you the Murder?

Oed. Could it then be so?—

Joc. They say in *Phoenicia*, on the Coast that parts from *Daulis* and from *Dalman*.

Oed. So!—How long I when happen'd this?

Joc. Some little time before you came to *Thebes*.

Oed. What will the Gods do with me?

Joc. What means that thought?

Oed. Something: but 'tis not your time to ask.

How old was *Laius*, what his shape, his Nature?

His Action and his mind?—quick, quick, and answer me!

Joc. Big made he was, and tall: his port was fierce,

Erect his countenance; Manly his looks; his eyes

Sate in his front, and darted from his eyes,

Commanding all he viewed: his hair just grizzled,

As in a green old age; bate by his beard;

You are his Picture?

Oed. *aside.* Pray Heav'n he drew me not!

Joc. So I have often told you.

Oed. True, you have;

Add that to the rest: how was the King

Attended when he travel'd?

Joc. By four Servants:

He went out privately.

Oed. Well, contented still,

One scap'd I hear; what else became of him?

Joc. When he beheld you, he, as King in *Thebes*,

He kneel'd, and trembling, beg'd I would dismiss him:

He had my leave; and now he's gone.

Oed. This Man must be punish'd.

Joc. He shall—yet have I leave to ask you.

Oed. Yes, you shall know: for where would I go?

The Anguish of my Soul; but in your breast:

I need not tell you *Corinth* claims my birth;

My Parents *Polybus* and *Merope*.

Two Royal Names; their only Child;

It happen'd once; 'twas in a Feast.

One warm with Wine, told me I was a Foundling.

Not this King's Son; I stung with this reproach,

Strook him: my Father heard of it; he

Was made ask pardon; and the business halt.

Joc. 'Twas somewhat odd.

Oed. And strangely it perplexed me.

I stole away to *Delphi*, and implor'd

The God, to tell my certain Parentage.

He bade me seek no Father; 'twas my Fate.

To

To kill my Father, and poison his Bed,
By marrying her whose love he hates.

Jac. Vain, vain Oracle!

Ord. But yet they fright me not.
I lookt on *Corinth* as a place of death,
Resolv'd my destiny should wait in vain,
And never catch me there.

Jac. Too nice a fear.

Ord. Suspend your thoughts, and direct not too soon.
Just in the place you nam'd, where three ways meet,
And near that time, five persons I encounter'd—
One was too like, (Heav'n grant it prove not him)
Whom you describe for *Lajus*, misshapen,
And hence they were, in men who liv'd on food,
I judg'd 'em Robbers, and by force I seiz'd
The force they us'd is lost, four men I slew;
The fifth upon his knees demanding life,
My mercy gave it—being me comfort now,
If I slew *Lajus*, what can be more wretched
From *Thebes* and you my curse has banish'd me,
From *Corinth* Fate.

Jac. Perplex not thus your mind;
My Husband fell by multitudes oppress'd,
So *Pharba* said: this Ban you should obey,
And murder'd not my *Lajus*, but *Pharba* him.

Ord. There's all my hope: Let *Pharba* call me this,
And I shall live again.
To you good Gods, I make my full appeal;
Or clear my Virtues or my Crimes reveal.
If wandering in the maze of Fate I see,
And backward trod the path I ought to take,
Impute my Errors to your own Deceit,
My hands are guilty, but my heart is free.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Pyrrhus, Creon.

Py. SOME business of import calls *Trinobaudes* away.
You seem to go with: not so hard to part, yet so hard
When you are pleas'd by a malicious joy.
Whole Red and Flaxy Beams all through your visage
A glowing pleasure. Sure you feel remorse,
And I could gladly hear.

Cre.

Cre. Wouldst thou believe me, and believe me, that I am
This glidy fair brook King, who in the night, and day, and
Has Thunder struck, and lightning, and the Vain, and
The conscious of an honest heart, and the Vain, and
He fears *Justice*, *Justice*, *Justice*, and the Vain, and
He fears the multitude, and which is the Vain, and
An Age of laughter, out of my marking, and
He chuses me to be his Grator, and
Swears that *Justice*, and the Vain, and
Are joint conspirators, and with the Vain, and
Appeals the raving *Justice*, which I am, and
To do, and the Vain, and

Pr. A dangerous undercrank, and
Directly opposite to your own interest, and
Cre. No, dear *Pr.*, I am, and the Vain, and
With all the Wings with which *Justice* could imp, and
My flight, I guid'd the mid'd of the City, and
There, standing on a Pike of steel, and
I to the mad and sickly *Justice*, and
With interrupting sobs, cry'd out, O *Justice*, and
O wretched *Justice*, thy King, thy *Odipus*, and
This barbarous stranger, this *Justice*, Monster, and
Is by the Oracle the Wife *Justice*, and
Proclaim'd the Murderer of the Royal *Justice*, and
Justice too, no longer my Sister, and
It found Comptroller in the Heart, and
Here I renounce all tie of Blood and Nature, and
For thee, O *Justice*, dear *Justice*, poor bleeding *Justice*, and
And there I wept, and then the Rabbie howl'd, and
And roar'd, and with a thousand other *Justice*, and
Gabbled Revenge, Revenge was all the cry, and
Pr. This cannot fail: I see you are a *Justice*, and
And *Odipus* cast out, and

Cre. Then straight came on
Alexander, with a Wild and bellowing Croud,
Whom when he had wrought, I whisper'd him to join,
And head the Forces while the King was in, and
So to the Palace I return'd, to meet
The King and greet him with another story,
But see, he enters,

Enter Odipus, seated, attended.
Old. Said you that *Justice* was a *Justice*, and yet
Intreats he may resign, without being ask'd, and
Of ought concern'd what we have to do, and
Pr. He started when I said, and the Vain, and
Replying, what he knew of *Justice*, and
Would give no satisfaction to the King, and

Then

Then, falling on his knees, begged for life,
To be dismiss'd from Court: he trembled so,
As if Conclusive death had been upon him;
And Hammer'd in his heart: Pray, that
That, had he been the murderer of a King,
Guilt and distraction could not have look'd so black.

Ord. By your description, I have thought you were dead;
Lay still, my Father, and I'll find the cause
Before these tears: If thou respect'st my peace,
Secure him, and I'll be his Father's Son;
Shrinks at his name.

Joc. Rather let him go:
So my poor boding heart might have been
Without a reason.

Ord. Hark, the *Thyrs* come!
Therefore retire: once more, I'll be thy Father's Son;
Let *Philo* be retain'd: I'll find the cause

Joc. You shall, while I have life, be still obey'd:
Have life, be still obey'd:
In vain you sooth me with your soft endearments,
And set the falsest countenance to view,
Your gloomy eyes, my Lord, bewray a troubled soul;
And inward languishing: that *Oracle*
Eats like a *Worm* in the heart of a man;
Preys on your heart, and eats the whole *Core*.
How'er the beautiful and fair show of beauty.

Ord. O, that will kill me with thy love's excess!

All, all is well; retire, the *Thyrs* come.

[*Ex. Jocasta.*]

Ghost, Oedipus!
Ord. Ha! again that *Ghost* of woe!
Thrice have I heard, thrice since the morning dawn'd,
It hollow'd loud, as if my *Guardian Spirit*
Call'd from some vaulted mansion; *Oedipus!*
Or is it but the work of melancholy?
When the Sun sets, shadows, that shew'd at noon,
But small, appear most long and terrible;
So when we think Fate hovers o'er our heads,
Our apprehensions shoot beyond all bounds.
Owls, Ravens, Crickets, and the like, of death,
Nature's worst Vermin, scare not *Man*, the *Scourge*
Echoes, the very heavings of a Voice,
Grey-hair'd *Old Men*, and *Graves*,
Each *Mole-hill* thought fearful to a *King*,
While we fantasize, and *Phantoms* of our fears
And sweat with an *Unclean* thought,
As if, like *Asa*, with their *Idols*,
We could sustain the burden of the World.

[*Enter Jocasta.*]

the

Ord.

Gre. O Sacred Sir, My Royal Lord ————
Ord. What now?
Thou seem'st affrighted at some dreadful sight
Thy breath comes short, thy daz'd eyes stare
On me for aid, as if thou wast pursu'd
I sent thee to the Palace, break thy road
Fear not, this Palace is a Sanctuary
The King himself's thy Guard

Gre. For me, alas, ————
My Life's not worth a thought, when weighty matters press
But fly, my Lord, fly as your life is sacred
Your Fate is precious to your faithful Crew
Whotherefore, on his knees, thus beseech thee
You would remove from *Thy* throne your rule
When I but offer'd at your Innocence
They gather'd stones, and mena'd me with death
And drove me through the Streets with imprecations
Against your Sacred Person, and those Traytors
Which justify'd your guilt: which cur'd *Thy* rage
Told, as from Heav'n, was cause of their destruction

Ord. Rise, worthy *Crew*, holla and take our Guard
Rank 'em in equal part upon the Square
Then open every Gate of this our City
And let the Torrent in: Hark, at once
I hear 'em roar: begone and break the dams
The dams that would oppose their passage
[*Al. Enter the Guard.*]

Adr. Your City
Is all in Arms, all bent to your defence
I heard but now, where I was close
A Thundring shout, which made my *City* tremble
Cry, Fire the Palace; where the *Queen* dwells
Yet, by th' Infernal Gods, those awful Powers
That have accus'd you, which shall stain our *Land*
And these Eyes seen, I must believe
For, since I knew the *Royal* *Calvary*
I have observ'd in all his *Acts*
And God-like clearness of his *Face*
Of Blood and Spirits
And here have sworn to perish with you

Ord. Be witness, Gods, ————
O what recompence can *Glorious* *Heaven* give
[*Adr.* Defend your *King* and *Country*]

And awe the Rebels with an *Invincible* *Arm*
But hark! the storm commences
[*Al. Enter the Guard.*]
We could sustain the burden of the *World*
The

The force of Majesty is never known
But in a General wrack: Then, then is seen
The difference 'twixt a Threshold and a Throne.

Enter Creon, Pyraemon, Alexander, Tiresias, Theban.

Alc. Where, where's this cruel King? *Theban,* behold
There stands your Plague, the ruin, desolation
Of this unhappy—— speak: shall I kill him?
Or shall he be cast out to banishment?

Alc. Theb. To banishment, away with him.

Oed. Hence, you Barbarians, to your slavish distance,
Fix to the Earth your fordid looks: for he
Who stirs, dares more than mad-men, Fiends, or Furies:
Who dares to face me, by the Gods, as well
May brave the Majesty of this King *Jove*.
Did I for this relieve you when besieg'd
By this fierce Prince, when coop'd within your Walls,
And to the very brink of Fate reduc'd,
When lean jaw'd famine made more havoc of you
Than does the Plague? But I rejoyce I know you,
Know the base stuff that temper'd your vile Souls:
The Gods be prais'd, I needed not your Empire,
Born to a greater, nobler of my own:
Nor shall the Center of the Earth now win me
To rule such Brutes, so barbarous a People.

Alc. Methinks, my Lord, I see a sad repentance,
A general consternation spread among 'em.

Oed. My reign is at an end: yet e'er I finish——

I'll do a Justice that becomes a Monarch,
A Monarch who I'th' midst of Swords and Javelins,
Dares agt upon his Throne encompass'd round
With Nations for his Guards: *Alexander*, you
Are nobly born, therefore shall lose your head:
Here, *Hemon*, take him, but for this, and this,
Let cords dispatch 'em. Hence, away with 'em,

[*Seizes him.*]

Tir. O Sacred Prince, pardon distracted *Thebes*,
Pardon her, if she errs by Heav'n's award;
If that the Infernal Spirits have declar'd
The depth of Fate, and if our Oracles
May speak, O do not too severely deal,
But let thy wretched *Thebes* at least complain:
If thou art guilty, Heav'n will make it known;
If innocent, then let *Thebes* dye.

Oed. I take thee at thy word. Run, haste, and save *Alexander*,
I swear the Prophet of the King shall dye.
Be witness, all you *Thebans*, of my Oath:
And *Thebes* be the Umpire.

Tir. I submit.

[*Trumpets sound.*]

Tir.

Oed. What mean those Trampets?

Ham. From your Native Country.

Enter Hamon with Alexander.

Great Sir, the fam'd *Aegon* is arriv'd,

That renown'd Favourite of the King your Father;

He comes as an Ambassador from *Corinth*,

And sues for Audience.

Oed. Haste, *Hamon*, fly, and tell him that I burn
T' embrace him.

Ham. The Queen, my Lord, at present holds him
In private Conference; but behold her here.

Enter Jocasta, Eurydice, &c.

Joc. Hail, happy *Oedipus*, happiest of Kings;

Henceforth be blest, blest as thou canst desire.

Sleep without fears the blackest nights away;

Let Furies haunt thy Palace, thou shalt sleep

Secure, thy slumbers shall be soft and gentle

As Infants dreams.

Oed. What does the Soul of all my joys intend?
And whither would this rapture?

Joc. O, I could rave,

Pull down those lying Fanes, and burn that Vault,

From whence resounded those false Oracles,

That robb'd my Love of thee: If we must pray,

Rear in the streets bright Altars to the Gods,

Let Virgins hands adorn the Sacrifice,

And not a grey-beard forging Priest come near,

To pry into the Bowels of the Victim,

And with his dotage mad the gaping World.

But see, the Oracle that I will trust,

True as the Gods, and affable as Men.

Enter Aegon, Knave.

Oed. O, to my Arms, welcome, my dear *Aegon*;

Ten thousand welcomes. O, my Foster Father,

Welcome as mercy to a man condemn'd!

Welcome to me,

As to a sinking Mariner.

The lucky Plank that brought him to the shore!

But speak, O tell me what so mighty joy

Is this thou bring'st, which so transports *Jocasta*?

Joc. Peace, peace *Aegon*; let *Jocasta* tell him!

O that I could for ever charm, as now,

My dearest *Oedipus*: Thy Royal Father,

Polybus, King of *Corinth*, is no more!

Oed. Ha! can it be? *Aegon*, answer me,

And speak in short, what my *Jocasta*'s transports

May over do.

Aeg. Since in few words, my Royal, Lord you ask

To know the truth, King *Polybus* is dead.

Œd. O all you Powers, let's possible be true, dead!

But that the Temple of my joy may still be true,
By just degrees, and hit at last the Stars.

Say, how, how dy'd he? Had he sword, by Fire,

Or Water? by Assassines, or Poison? speak.

Or did he languish under some disease?

Ege. Of no distemper, of no blast he dy'd,

But fell like Autumn-Fruit that mellow'd long:

Ev'n wonder'd at, because he dropt no sooner.

Fate seem'd to wind him up for fourscore years;

Yet freshly ran he on ten Winters more.

Till, like a Clock worn out with eating time,

The Wheels of weary life at last stood still.

Œd. O, let me press thee in my youthful arms,

And smother thy old age in my embraces.

Yes *Theban*, yes *Teucla*, yes *Adrestus*,

Old *Polybus*, the King my Father's dead.

Fires shall be kindled in the midst of *Thebes*,

I'th' midst of Tumult, Wars, and Pestilence.

I will rejoyce for *Polybus* his death.

Know, be it known to the limits of the World;

Yet farther let it pass your dazzling roof.

The mansion of the Gods, and strike 'em deaf.

With everlasting acclamations of Thundring joy.

Tir. Fate! Nature! Fortune! what is all this World?

Œd. Now, *Œdipus*, now, the blind old wizard Prophet,

Where are your boding Ghosts, your Altars now,

Your birds of knowledge, that in dusky Air,

Chatter Futurity; and where are now

Your Oracles, that call'd me Parricide?

Is he not dead? deep laid in's Monument?

And was not I in *Thebes* when he attacks him?

Avant, begon, you Vizers of the Gods!

Were I as other Sons, now I should weep;

But as I am? I've reason to rejoyce!

And will, tho his cold shade should rise and blast me,

O, for this death, let Waters break their bow,

Rocks, Valleys, Hills, with splashing let's ring:

Teucla, *Teucla*, *Teucla* sing!

Tir. Who would not now conclude an happy end?

But all Fate's turns are swift and unexpected.

Ege. Your Royal Mother *Merope*, as if

She had no Soul since you forsok the Land,

Waves all the neighbouring Princes that adore her.

Œd. Waves all the Princes! Poor heart! for what, O speak.

Ege. She, tho in full-blown flow'rs of glorious beauty,

Grown cold, ev'n in the Summer of her Age;
And for your sake half-worn and old married.

Oed. How! for my sake, *Oedipus* not marry: O,
My fit returns.

Ege. This Diamond with a thousand kisses bless,
With thousand sighs and wishes for your safety.
She charg'd me give you, with the general homage
Of our *Corinthian* Lords.

Oed. There's Magick in it, take it from my sight;
There's not a beam it darts, but carries hell,
Hot flashing lust, and Necromantick incest:
Take it from the sick eyes. Oh hide it from me.
No, my *Jocasta*, thò *Therbas* call me out,
While *Merope's* alive, I'll ne'er return!
O, rather let me walk round the wide World
A begger, than accept a Diadem
On such abhorr'd conditions.

Joc. You make, my Lord, your own unhappiness,
By these extravagant and needless fears.

Oed. Needless! O, all you Gods! by Heav'n I'd rather
Embrue my arms up to my very Shoulders
In the dear entrails of the best of Fathers,
Than offer at the execrable
Of damned incest: therefore no more of her.

Ege. And why, O Sacred Sir, if Subjects may
Presume to look into their Monarch's breast,
Why should the chaste and spotless *Merope*
Infuse such thoughts as I must blush to name?

Oed. Because the God of *Delphos* did forewarn me?
With thundering Oracles.

Ege. May I intreat to know 'em?

Oed. Yes, my *Egeon*; but the sad remembrance
Quite blasts my Soul: see then the swelling Priest!
Methinks I have his Image now in view;
He mounts the *Tripes* in a minutes space,
His clouded head knocks at the Temple roof,
While from his mouth
These dismal words are heard:

"Fly, wretch, whom Fate has doom'd thy Father's blood to spill,
"And with preposterous Births thy Mother's Womb to fill.

Ege. Is this the cause
Why you refuse the Diadem of *Corinth*?

Oed. The Cause! why is it not a monstrous one?

Ege. Great Sir, you may return; and tho' you should
Enjoy the Queen (which all the Gods forbid)
The act would prove no incest.

Oed. How, *Egeon*?

The

Thou I enjoy'd my Mother, nor is it known how I came to this World:
Thou rav'st, and so do I, and thou art all that I can have a balance of:
My madness; look, they're dead, and I am left alone:
Not incest! what, not incest with my Mother's bones, nor with her babe!

Ege. My Lord, Queen Hecuba is not your Mother.

Oed. Ha! did I hear that right? *My Mother!*

Ege. Not was Polybus your Father.

Oed. Then all my days and nights must now be spent
In curious search, to find out thine dark Parents:
Who gave me to the World: speak then, *Egeon*,
By all the Gods Celestial and Infernal,

By all the eyes of Nature, Blood and Friendship,
Conceal not from this rack'd despairing King
A point or smallest grain of what thou know'st:

Speak then, O answer to my doubts directly:
If Royal Polybus was not my Father,

Why was I call'd his Son?

Ege. He, from my Arms,
Receiv'd you as the fairest gift of Nature:
Not but you were adorn'd with all the Riches
That Empire could bestow in costly mantles
Upon its Infant Heir.

Oed. But was I made the Heir of *Corinthus* Crown,
Because *Egeon's* hand presented me?

Ege. By my advice,
Being past all hope of Children,
He took, embrac'd, and own'd you for his Son.

Oed. Perhaps I then am yours, instruct me, Sir:
If it be so, I'll kneel and weep before you,
With all the obedience of a penitent child,
Imploring pardon.

Kill me if you please,
I will not writhe my Body at the wound:
But sink upon your feet with a last sigh,
And ask forgiveness with my dying hands.

Ege. O rise, and call not to this aged cheek
The little blood which should keep warm my heart:
You are not mine nor ought I to be blest
With such a God-like off-spring: Sir, I found you
Upon the Mount *Citharon*.

Oed. O speak, go on, the Air grows sensible
Of the great things you utter, and is calm:
The hurry'd Orbs, with storms so rack'd of late,
Seem to stand still, as if that *you* were talking
Citharon! speak, the valley of *Citharon*!

Ege. Oft-times before I thither did resort,
Charm'd

Charm'd with the Conversation of a Man, who had been
Who led a rural life, and had been
O'er all the Shepherd's flock, who had been
Tended their numerous flock, in this Man's Arms, I found not
I saw you smiling at a fatal Dagger,
Whose point he often offer'd at your Breast;
But then you smil'd, and then you drew it back;
Then lifted it again, you smil'd again,
Till he at last in fury threw it from him,
And cry'd aloud, the Gods forbid thy death;
Then I rush'd in, and after some discourse,
To me he did bequeath your innocent life,
And I, the welcome care to Phobus.

Oed. To whom belongs this Master of the Shepherds?

Ege. His name I knew not, or have I forgot,
That he was of the Family of *Laryus*,
I will remember.

Oed. And is your Friend alive? for if he be
I'll buy his presence tho' it cost my Crown.

Ege. Your menial attendants best can tell
Whether he lives, or not, and who has now
His place.

Joc. Winds bear me to some barren Island,
Where print of human Foot was never seen;
O'er-grown with Weeds of such a monstrous height,
Their baleful tops are wash'd with hailing clouds,
Beneath whose venomous shade I may have vent
For horror that would blast the barbarous world.

Oed. If there be any here that knows the person
Whom he describ'd, I charge him on his life
To speak; concealment shall be sudden death;
But he who brings him forth, shall have reward
Beyond Ambition's lust.

Tyr. His name is *Phobus*:
Jocasta knows him well; but if I may
Advise, Rest where you are, and seek no farther.

Oed. Then all goes well, since *Phobus* is secur'd
By my *Jocasta*. Haste, and bring him forth;
My Love, my Queen, give Orders:—Hail what means
These tears and Groans, and Sighings? speak my Fair,
What are thy troubles?

Joc. Yours; and yours are mine:
Let me conjure you take the Prophets counsel,
And let this *Phobus* go.

Oed. Not for the World:
By all the Gods, I'll know my birth, tho' death
Attends the search: I have already paid

The middle of the stream; and to return
Seems greater labour than to venture
Therefore produce him

Joc. Once more, by the Gods,
I beg, my *Oedipus*, my Lord, my Master,
My Love, my all, my only almost happy
I beg you banish *Phorbas*: O the Gods
I kneel, that you may grant this last request:
Deny me all things else; but for my sake
And as you prize your own eternal quiet,
Never let *Phorbas* come into your presence.

Oed. You must be rais'd, and *Phorbas* shall appear,
Tho' his dead eyes were *Basilisks*: Guards, hark ye,
Search the Queens Lodgings; find and force him higher.

Enter Guards.

Joc. O, *Oedipus*, yet send,
And stop their Entrance, 'er it be too late:
Unless you wish to see *Jocasta* rent
With Furies, slain out-right with meer distraction,
Keep from your eyes and mine the dreadful *Phorbas*:
Forbear this search, I'll think you more than mortal:
Will you yet hear me?

Oed. Tempests will be heard,
And Waves will dash the Rocks their Bells keep—
But see, they enter. If thou truly lov'st me,
Either forbear this subject, or retire.

Enter Hamon, Guards, with Phorbas.

Joc. Prepare then, wretched Prince, prepare to hear
A story, that shall turn thee into Stone,
Could there be hewn a monstrous Gap in Nature,
A flaw made through the Center, by some God,
Through which the Groans of Ghosts might strike thy ears,
They would not wound thee, as this story will.
Hark, hark! a hollow voice calls out aloud,
Jocasta: yes, I'll to the Royal Bed,
Where first the Mysteries of our loves were acted,
And double dye it with imperial Crimson,
Tear of this curling hair
Be gorg'd with Fire, Rab every vital part,
And when at last I'm slain, to Crown the horror
My poor tormented Ghost shall cleave the ground,
To try if Hell can yet more deeply wound.

Oed. She's gone; and as she went, methought her eyes
Grew larger, while a thousand Frantick Spirits
Seething, like rising bubbles, wth the brim
Peep'd from the Watry brink, and would have
I'll seek no more; but hush my Griefs up to my Heart,
That

That throws me on my Fate—Impossible!—
O wretched Man, whose too too happy thoughts
Ride swifter than the galloping Heav'n's sound,
With an Eternal hurry of the Soul:

Nay there's a time when ev'n the swelling sea
Seems to stand still, dead Calms are in the Ocean,
When not a breath disturbs the deep; Waves
But Man, the very Monster of the World,
Is ne'er at rest, the Soul for ever wakes,
Come then, since Destiny thus drives me on,
Let's know the bottom. *Here, you I sent to find*
Where is that *Phobus*?

Ham. Here, my Royal Lord.

Oed. Speak first, *Aegon*, say, is this the Man?

Aeg. My Lord it is: tho' time has plough'd that face,
With many furrows since I saw it first;
Yet I'm too well acquainted with the ground, quite to forget it.

Oed. Peace; stand back a while.
Come hither Friend; I hear thy name is *Phobus*.
Why dost thou turn thy face? I charge thee answer
To what I shall enquire: Wert thou not once
The Servant of King *Lam* here in *Therbes*?

Phor. I was, great Sir, his true and faithful Servant,
Born and bred up in Court, no Foreign Slave.

Oed. What Office hadst thou? what was thy Employment?

Phor. He made me Lord of all his Rural pleasures;
For much belov'd 'em: oft I entertain'd
With sporting *Servants*, o'er whom I had command.

Oed. Where was thy Residence? at what part o'th' Country
Didst thou most frequently resort?

Phor. To Mount *Citharon*, and the pleasant Vallies
Which all about lye shadowing its large feet.

Oed. Come forth *Aegon*: Hail, why starest thou, *Phobus*?
Forward, I say, and Face to Face confront him,
Look wistly on him, through him if thou canst,
And tell me on thy Life, say, dost thou know him?
Didst thou e'er see him? converse with him;
Near Mount *Citharon*?

Phor. Who, my Lord, this Man?

Oed. This Man, this old, this venerable Man:
Speak, didst thou ever meet him? didst thou see him?

Phor. Where, Sacred Sir?

Oed. Near Mount *Citharon*: answer to the purpose;
'Tis a King speaks; and Royal minutes are sold dear:
Of much more worth than the sand Vagabond's skill:
Didst thou e'er see this Man? didst thou see him?

Phor. Most sure, my Lord, I have seen him like thee.

His Visage bears; but know not where nor when.

Ege. Is't possible you should forget your ancient Friend?
There are perhaps

Particulars which may excite your dead remembrance.

Have you forgot I took an Infant from you,

Doom'd to be murder'd in that gloomy Vale:

The Swadling-bands were Purple, wrought with Gold,

Have you forgot too how you wept and begg'd

That I should breed him up, and ask no more?

Phor. What are I begg'd; thou, like a Dotard, speak'st
More than is requisite: and what of this?

Why is it mention'd now? and why, O why

Dost thou betray the Secrets of thy Friend?

Ege. Be not too rash. That Infant grew at last

A King: and here the happy Monarch stands.

Phor. Ha! Whither would'st thou? O what hast thou utter'd!
For what thou hast said, Death strike thee dumb for ever.

Oed. Forbear to curse the innocent; and be
Accurst thy self, thou shifting Traytor, Villain,
Damn'd Hypocrite, equivocating Slave.

Phor. O Heaven's! wherein, my Lord, have I offended?

Oed. Why speak you not according to my Charge?

Bring forth the Rack: since Mildness cannot win you,
Torments shall force.

Phor. Hold, hold, O dreadful Sir;

You will not Rack an innocent old Man.

Oed. Speak then.

Phor. Alas, what would you have me say?

Oed. Did this old Man take from your Arms an Infant?

Phor. He did: And, Oh! I wish to all the Gods,

Phor had perish'd in that very moment.

Oed. Moment, Thou shalt be Hours, Days, Years a dying.

Here, bind his hands; he dallies with my Fury:

But I shall find a way.

Phor. My Lord, I said

I gave the Infant to him.

Oed. Was he thy own; or given thee by another?

Phor. He was not mine; but given me by another.

Oed. Whence? and from whom? what City? of what House?

Phor. O, Royal Sir, I bow me to the ground,

Would I could sink beneath it: by the Gods,

I do conjure you to enquire no more.

Oed. Furies and Hell! *Phor.* bring forth the Rack;

Fetch hither Cords, and Knives, and sulphurous Flames:

He shall be bound, and gash'd, his Skin flaid off,

And burnt alive.

Phor. O spare my Age!

Oed. Rise then, and speak.

Pbor. Dread Sir, I will.

Oed. Who gave that Infant to thee?

Pbor. One of King *Laius*'s Family.

Oed. O, you immortal Gods! but say, who gave it?
Which of the Family of *Laius* gave it?
A Servant, or one of the Royal Blood?

Pbor. O Wretched State! I dye, unless I speak;
And, if I speak, most certain death attends me!
Oed. Thou shalt not dye. Speak then, who was it, speak,
While I have sense to understand the horror;
For I grow cold.

Pbor. The Queen *Jocasta* told me
It was her Son by *Laius*.

Oed. O you Gods! But did she give it thee?

Pbor. My Lord, she did.

Oed. Wherefore, for what? — O break not yet my Heart,
Tho' my Eyes burst, no matter: wilt thou tell me,
Or must I ask for ever? for what end?
Why gave she thee her Child?

Pbor. To murder it.

Oed. O more than savage! murder her own Bowels!
Without a cause!

Pbor. There was a dreadful one,
Which had foretold that most unhappy Son
Should kill his Father, and enjoy his Mother.

Oed. But, one thing more,
Jocasta told me thou wert by the Chariot
When the old King was slain? Speak, I conjure thee,
For I shall never ask thee ought again.
What was the number of the Assassins?

Pbor. The dreadful deed was acted but by one;
And sure that one had much of of your resemblance.

Oed. 'Tis well! I thank you Gods! 'tis wondrous well!
Daggers and Poison; O there is no need
For my dispatch; and you, you merciless Powers,
Hoard up your Thunder Stones; keep, keep your Bolts
For Crimes of little note.

Asp. Help, *Hamon*, help, and bow him gently forward;
Chafe, chafe his Temples: how the mighty Spirits,
Half strang'd with the damp his Sorrows rain'd,
Struggle for vent: but see, he breaths again,
And vigorous Nature breaks through all opposition.
How fares my Royal Friend?

Oed. The worse for you,
O barbarous Men, and oh the hated sight,
Why did you force me back to curse the day.

[Exit.]

To curse my Friends; to blast with this dark breath
 The yet untainted Earth and circling Air;
 To raise new Plagues, and call new Vengeance down,
 Why did you tempt the Gods, and dare to touch me?
 Methinks there's not a hand that grasps this Hell
 But should run up like Flax all blazing Fire,
 Stand from this spot, I wish you army Friends,
 And come not near me, lest the gaping Earth
 Swallow you too——Lo, I am gone already.

*Draws, and claps his Sword to his Breast, which Adrastus
 strikes away with his Foot.*

Adr. You shall no more be trusted with your Life:

Creon, Alexander, Hemon, help to hold him.

Oed. Cruel Adrastus! Wilt thou, Hemon too?

Are these the obligations of my Friends,
 O worse than worst of my most barbarous Foes!
 Dear, dear Adrastus, look with half an Eye
 On my unheard of woes, and judge thy self,
 If it be fit that such a wretch should live!
 O, by these melting Eyes, un'd to weep,
 With all the low submissions of a Slave,
 I do conjure thee give my horrors way;

Talk not of Life, for that will make me rave:
 As well thou mayst advise a tortur'd wretch,
 All mangled o'er from head to foot with wounds,
 And his bones broke, to wait a better day.

Adr. My Lord, you ask me things impossible;
 And I with Justice should be thought your Foe,
 To leave you in this Tempest of your Soul.
 Tho' banish'd Thebes, in Corinth you may Reign
 Th' Infernal Pow'rs themselves exact no more:
 Calm then your rage, and once more seek the Gods.

Oed. I'll have no more to do with Gods, nor Men:
 Hence from my Arms, avant. Enjoy thy Mother!
 What, violate, with Bestial appetite,
 The sacred Veils that wrapt thee yet unborn;
 This is not to be born; hence, off, I say!
 For they who lett my Vengeance, make themselves
 Accomplices in my most horrid guilt.

Adr. Let it be so, we'll fence Heat's fury from you,
 And suffer altogether: This perhaps,
 When ruin comes, may help to break your fall.

Oed. O that, as oft I have at *Atthis* seen
 The Stage arise, and the big Clouds descend;
 So now in very deed I might behold
 The pond'rous Earth, and all yon marble Roof
 Meet, like the hands of *Jeh*, and crush Mankind:

For all the Elements, and all the Pow'rs
Celestial, nay, Terrestrial and Infernal,
Conspire the Rack of our cast *Oedipus*;
Fall darkness then, and everlasting night,
Shadow the Globe; may the Sun never dawn,
The Silver Moon be blotted from her Orb,
And for an universal rout of Nature
Through all the inmost Chambers of the sky,
May there not be a glimpse, 'one Starry spark,
But Gods meet Gods, and juggle in the dark,
That Jars may rise, and wrath Divine be hurl'd,
Which may to Atoms shake the solid World. *[Exeunt.]*

ACT V. SCENE I.

Creon, Alexander, Pyrramon.

Cre. **T**HEBES is at length my own; and all my wishes,
Which sure were great as Royalty ere form'd,
Fortune and my auspicious Stars have Crown'd.
O Diadem, thou Center of Ambition,
Where all its different Lines, are reconcil'd,
As if thou wert the burning-glass of Glory!

Pyr. Might I be Counsellor, I wou'd intreat you
To cool a little, Sir;
Find out *Eurydice*;
And, with the resolution of a Man
Mark'd out for greatness, give the fatal choice
Of Death or Marriage.

Ale. Survey curs'd *Oedipus*,
As one who, tho' unfortunate, 's belov'd,
Thought innocent, and therefore much lamented
By all the *Thebans*; you must mark him dead:
Since nothing but his death, not banishment,
Can give assurance to your doubtful Reign.

Cre. Well have you done to snatch me from the storm
Of racking Transport, where the little streams
Of Love, Revenge, and all the under Passions,
As Waters are by sucking Whirl-pools drawn,
Were quite devour'd in the vast Gulph of Empire;
Therefore *Pyrramon*, as you boldly urg'd,
Eurydice shall dye, or be my Bride.
Alexander, Summon to their Master's aid

My Menial Servants, and all those whom change
Of State, and hope of the new Monarch's Favour
Can win to take our part: Away, what now?

Enter Hamon.

When Hamon weeps, without the help of Ghosts,
I may foretell there is a fatal Cause.

Hem. Is't possible you should be ignorant
Of what has happen'd to the desperate King?

Cre. I know no more, but that he was conducted
Into his Closet, where I saw him fling
His trembling Body on the Royal Bed:
All left him there, at his desire, alone:
But fore no ill, unless he dy'd with grief,
Could happen, for you bore his Sword away.

Hem. I did; and, having lock'd the door, I stood
And through a chink I found, not only heard,
But saw him, when he thought no Eye beheld him:

At first, deep sighs heav'd from his woful Heart,
Murmurs and groans, that shook the outward Rooms,
And art thou still alive, O wretch! he cry'd?
Then groan'd again, as if his sorrowful Soul
Had crack'd the strings of Life, and burst away.

Cre. I weep to hear: how then should I have griev'd
Had I beheld this wondrous heap of Sorrow
But, to the fatal period.

Hem. Thrice he struck,
With all his force, his hollow groaning Breast,
And thus, with out-cries, to himself complain'd.
But thou canst weep then, and thou think'st 'tis well,
These bubbles of the shallowest emptiest sorrow
Which Children vent for toys, and Women vain
For any trifle their fond Hearts are set on;
Yet these thou think'st are ample satisfaction
For bloodiest Murder, and for burning Lust:
No, Parricide, if thou must weep, weep blood;
Weep Eyes, instead of Tears: O, by the Gods,
'Tis greatly thought, he cry'd, and then he said,
Which said, he smil'd reverendly, and then he said,
Upon the floor: thence gazing at the Skies,
His Eye-balls fiery Red, and glowing vengeance
Gods, I accuse you not, tho' I no more

Will view your Hew'n, till with more durable glories
The mighty Soul's immortal Perspectives
I find your dazzling Beings: Take, he cry'd,
Take, Eyes, your last, your fatal farewell view.

When with a groan that seem'd the call of Death,
With horrid force lifting his limping hand,
He snatch'd, he tore, from forth their bloody Orbs,
The Balls of sight, and dash't em on the ground.

Cre. A Master-piece of horror; new and dreadful!

Hem. I ran to succour him; but, oh! too late;

For he had pluck'd the remnant strings away.

What then remains, but that I find *Thebes*,

Who, with his Wisdom, may allay those Furies

That haunt his gloomy Soul?

Cre. Heav'n will reward

Thy care; most honest, faithful, foolish *Hemon*;

But see, *Alexander* enters, well attended.

Emer Alexander, attended.

I see thou hast been diligent.

Alex. Nothing these.

For number to the Crouds that soon will follow;

Be resolute,

And call your utmost Fury to revenge.

Cre. Ha! thou hast given

Th' Alarm to Cruelty; and never may

These Eyes be clos'd, till they behold *Adrastus*

Stretch'd at the feet of false *Eurydice*.

Enter Adrastus, Eurydice, attended.

Adr. Alas *Eurydice*, what fond rash Man

What inconsiderate and ambitious Fool,

That shall hereafter read the Fate of *Oedipus*,

Will dare, with his frail hand, to grasp a Scepter?

Eur. 'Tis true, a Crown seems dreadful, and I wish

That you and I, more lowly plac'd; might pass

Our softer hours in humble Cells away;

Not but I love you to that infinite height,

I could (O wondrous proof of fiercest Love)

Be greatly wretched in a Court with you.

Adr. Take then this most lov'd innocence away;

Fly from tumultuous *Thebes*,

From Blood and Murder,

Fly from the Author of all Villanies,

Rapes, Death, and Treason, from that Fury *Creon*;

Vouchsafe that I, o'rejoyd, may bear you hence,

And at your feet present the Crown of *Argos*.

Creon and attendants come up to him.

Cre. I have o're-heard thy black design, *Adrastus*;

And therefore, as a Traytor to this State,

Death ought to be thy Lot: let it suffice

That *Thebes* surveys thee as a Prince; shall not

Her proffer'd mercy, but refuse bedimes,

Left the repent and hasten on thy Doom.

Adr. Think not, most abject,

Most abhor'd of Men,

Adrastus will vouchsafe to answer thee.

Thebans, to you I justify my Love;

I have address'd my Prayers to this fair Princess;

But, if I ever meant a violence,

Or thought to Ravish, as that Traitor did,

What humblest Adorations could not win;

Brand me, you Gods, blot me with foul dishonour,

And let Men curse me by the name of *Creon*.

Eur. Hear me, O *Theban*, if you dread the wrath

Of her whom Fate ordain'd to be your Queen,

Hear me, and dare not, as you prize your lives,

To take the part of that Rebellious Traitor.

By the Decree of Royal *Oedipus*,

By Queen *Jocasta's* order, by what's more,

My own dear Vows of everlasting Love,

I here resign, to Prince *Adrastus* Arms

All that the World can make me Mistress of.

Cri. O perjur'd Woman!

Draw all; and when I give the word, fall on

Traytor, resign the Princess, or this moment

Expect, with all those most unfortunate wretches,

Upon this spot straight to be hewn in pieces.

Adr. No, Villain, no,

With twice those odds of Men,

I doubt not in this Cause

To vanquish thee.

Captain, remember to your Care I give

My Love; Ten thousand thousand times more dear

Than Life, or Liberty.

Cri. Fall on, *Alexander*.

Pyrramon, you and I must wheel about

For nobler Game, the Princess.

Adr. Ah, Traitor dost thou shun me?

Follow, follow,

My brave Companions; see, the *Conards* fly.

Eur. fighting: *Creon's* Party beaten off by *Adrastus*.

Eur. *Oedipus*.

Oed. O, 'tis too little this? thy loss of Sight,

What has it done? I shall be gaz'd at now

The more; be pointed at. There goes the Monster?

Nor have I hid my horrors from my self;

For tho' corporeal Light be lost for ever,

The bright reflecting Soul, through glaring *Opticks*,

Presents in larger size her black Ideas

Doubling the bloody prospect of my Crimes,
Holds Fancy down, and makes her act again,
With Wife, and Mother, Torments, Hell, and Furies.
Ha! now the baleful offspring's brought to light!
In horrid form they rank themselves before me,
What shall I call this Medley of Creation?
Here one, with all th' obedience of a Son,
Borrowing *Jocasta's* look, kneels at my Feet,
And calls me Father, there a sturdy Boy,
Resembling *Laius* just as when I kill'd him,
Bears up, and with his cold Hand grasping mine,
Cries out, How fares my Brother *Oedipus*?
What, Sons and Brothers! Sisters and Daughters too?
Fly all, begon, fly from my whirling Brain,
Hence, Incest, Murder, hence, you ghastly Figures,
O Gods! Gods, answer; is there any mean?
Let me go mad, or dye.

Enter Jocasta.

Joc. Where, where is this most wretched of Mankind,
This stately Image of Imperial Sorrow,
Whose story told, whose very name but mention'd,
Would cool the rage of Fevers, and unlock
The hand of Lust from the pale Virgin's Hail,
And throw the Ravisher before her Feet?

Oed. By all my fears, I think *Jocasta's* voice
Hence; fly; begon: O thou far worse than Woe,
Of damning Charms! O abhor'd, loath'd Creature!
Fly, by the Gods, or by the Fiends, I charge thee,
Far as the East, West, North, or South of Heav'n;
But think not thou shalt ever enter there:

The Golden Gates are ward'd with Adamant,
Gainst thee, and me; and the Celestial Guards,
Still as we rise, will dash our Spirits down.

Joc. O wretched Pair! O greatly wretched we!
Two Worlds of Woe!

Oed. Art thou not gone then? Ha!
How dar'st thou stand the Fury of the Gods?
Or com'st thou in the Grave to reap new pleasures?

Joc. Talk on: all thou mak'st mad my rowling Brain;
Groan still more Death; and may those dismal sources
Still bubble on, and pour forth Blood and Tears.
Methinks at such a meeting, Heav'n stands still,
The Sea nor Ebb, nor Flow: this Mole-hill Earth
Is heav'd no more: the bane Emmets cease.
Yet hear me on —

Oed. Speak then, and halt my Soul.

Joc. O, my lov'd Lord, tho' I resolve a Ruine

To make my Crimes; by all my Miseries,
'Tis horror, worse than thousand thousand deaths,
To send me hence without a kind farewell.

Oed. Gods, how she makes me stay thee, O *Jocasta*,
Speak something e'r thou goest for ever from me.

Joc. 'Tis Woman's weakness that I would be pity'd;
Pardon me then, O greatest, tho' most wretched,
Of all thy Kind: my Soul is on the brink,
And sees the boiling Furnace just beneath:
Do not thou push me off, and I will go
With such a willingness, as if that Heaven
With all its Glories glow'd for my reception.

Oed. O, in my Heart, I feel the pangs of Nature;
It works with kindness or: Give, give me way;
I feel a melting here, a tenderness,
Too mighty for the anger of the Gods:
Direct me to thy knees, yet oh forbear:
Lest the dead Embers should revive,
Stand off — and at just distance

Let me groan my horrors — here
On the Earth, here below my utmost Gale;
Here sob my sorrows, till I burst with sighing;
Here gasp and Languish out my wounded Soul.

Joc. In spite of all those Crimes, the cruel Gods
Can charge me with, I know my Innocence;
Know yours: 'tis Fate alone that makes us wretched;
For you are still my Husband.

Oed. Swear I am,
And I'll believe thee, steal into thy Arms,
Renew endearments, think 'em no pollutions,
But chaste as Spirits joys: gently I'll come
Thus weeping blind, like dewy Night, upon thee,
And fold thee softly in my Arms to slumbers.

[The Ghost of Laius ascends by degrees pointing at *Jocasta*.]

Joc. Begone, my Lord! Alas, what are we doing?
Fly from my Arms! Whirl-winds, Seas, Continents,
And Worlds, divide us! O thrice happy thou
Who hast nouse of Eyes; for here's a sight
Would turn the melting Face of Mercy, left
To a wild Fury.

Oed. Ha! what seest thou there?

Joc. The Spirit of my Husband! O the Gods!
How wan he looks!

Oed. Thou rav'st; thy Husband's here.

Joc. There, there he mourns,
In circling fire, amongst the blushing Clouds!
And see, he waves *Jocasta* from the World!

Ghost.

Ghost. Jocasta, Oedipus.

Oed. What wouldst thou have?

[With much Thunder.]

Thou know'st I cannot come to thee, detain'd
In darkness here, and kept from means of death.
I've heard a Spirit's force is wonderful;
At whose approach when starting from his Dungeon,
The Earth does shake, and the old Ocean groans,
Rocks are remov'd, and Towers are Thundred down;
And walls of Brass, and Gates of Adamant,
Are passable as Air, and fleet like Winds.

Joc. Was that a Raven's Croak or my Son's voice?
No matter which; I'll to the Grave and hide me:
Earth open or I'll tear thy bowels up.
Hark! he goes on, and blabs the deed of Intel.

Oed. Strike then, Imperial Ghost; dash all at once
This house of Clay into a thousand pieces.
That my poor lingring Soul may take her flight
To your immortal Dwellings.

Joc. Haste thee then,
Or I shall be before thee: See, thou canst not see;
Then I will tell thee that my wings are on:
I'll mount, I'll fly, and with a port Divine
Glide all along the gandy Milky Iot,
To find my *Lajus* out; ask every God
In his bright Palace, if he knows my *Lajus*,
My Murder'd *Lajus*!

Oed. Ha! how's this, *Jocasta*?
Nay, if thy brain be sick, then thou art happy.

Joc. Ha! will you not? shall I not find him out?
Will you not show him? are my tears despis'd?
Why, then I'll thunder, yes, I will be mad,
And fright you with my cries, yes, cruel Gods,
Tho' Vultures, Eagles, Dragons tear my heart,
I'll snatch Celestial flames, fire all your dwellings,
Melt down your golden Roofs, and make your doors
Of Crystal fly from off their Diamond Hinges;
Drive you all out from your Ambrosial Hives,
To swarm like Bees about the field of Heav'n;
This will I do unless you show me *Lajus*.
My dear, my Murder'd Lord. O *Lajus*! *Lajus*! *Lajus*!

[Ex. Jocasta.]

Oed. Excellent grief! why, this is as it should be!
No Mourning can be suitable to Crimes
Like ours, but what death makes, or madness forms.
I could have wish'd methought for fight again,
To mark the gallantry of her distraction:
Her blazing Eyes darting the wandering Stars.
I have

Thave seen her mouth the Heav'n's and mate the Gods,
While with her Thundering Voice she menat'd high,
And every Accent twang'd with lightning sorrow;
But what's all this to thee? thou Coward yet
Art living, canst not, wilt not find the Road
To the great Palace of magnificent Death,
Tho' thousand ways lead to his thousand doors,
Which day and night are still unbarr'd for all.

[*Clashing of Swords: Drums and Trumpets without.*
Hark! 'tis the noise of clashing Swords: the sound
Comes near: O, that a Battle would come o'er me?
If I but grasp a Sword: or wrest a Dagger,
I'll make a ruine with the first that falls.

Enter Hæmon, with Guards.

Hæm. Seize him, and bear him to the Western Tow'r.
Pardon me, Sacred Sir: I am inform'd
That *Creon* has designs upon your life:
Forgive me then, if, to preserve you from him,
I order your Confinement.

Oed. Slaves unhand me.

I think thou hast a Sword: 'twas the wrong side: --
Yet, cruel *Hæmon*, think not I will live;
He that could tear his Eyes out, sure can find
Some desperate way to hush this curst breath:
Or if I starve! but that's a lingering Fate;
Or if I leave my brains upon the wall!
The Aciery Sunk can easily o'er shoot.
Those bounds with which thou striv'st to pale her in:
Yes, I will perish in despite of thee;
And, by the rage that stirs me, if I meet thee
In the other World I'll curse thee for this usage.

Hæm. *Tiresias*, after him! and with your counsel
Advise him humbly; charm, if possible,
These feuds within: while I without extinguish,
Or perish in th' Attempt, the Furious *Creon*,
That Brand, which sets our City in a Flame.

Tir. Heav'n prosper your intent, and give a period
To all your Plagues: what old *Tiresias* can
Shall straight be done. Lead, *Manto* to the Tow'r. [Ex. *Tir. Manto.*

Hæm. Follow me all, and help to part this Fray, [Trumpets again.
Or fall together in the bloody broil. [Ex.

*Enter Creon with Euridice, Pyracmon and his Party giving
ground to Adrastus.*

Cre. Hold, hold your Armes, *Adrastus* Prince of Argos,
Hear, and behold; *Eurydice* is my Prisoner.

Adr. What would'st thou, Hell-bound?

Cre. See this brandish'd Dagger:

Forgo th' advantage which thy Arms have won,
Or, by the Blood, which trembles through the Veins
Of her whom more than life I know thou lov'st,
I'll bury to the fast, in her fair breast,
This Instrument of my Revenge.

Ad. Stay thee, damn'd wretch; hold, stop thy bloody hand.

Crr. Give order then, that on this instant now,
This moment, all thy Soldiers straight disband.

Ad. Away my Friends, since Fate has so allotted;
Begone, and leave me to the Villain's mercy.

Enr. Ah, my *Adrastus*! call 'em, call 'em back!
Stand there; come back! O, cruel barbarous Men!
Could you then leave your Lord, your Prince, your King,
After so bravely having fought his Cause,
To perish by the hand of this base Villain?
Why rather rush you not at once together
All to his ruine? drag him through the Streets,
Hang his contagious Quarters on the Gates;
Nor let my death afflict you.

Crr. Dye first thy self then.

Ad. O, I charge thee, hold.

Hence, from my presence all; he's not my Friend
That disobeys: See, art thou now appear'd?
Or, is there ought else yet remains to do
That can atone to thee? Take thy thirst of Blood
With mine; but save, O save that innocent wretch.

Crr. Forego thy Sword, and yield thy self my Prisoner.

Enr. Yet while there's any dawn of hope to save
Thy precious life, my dear *Adrastus*,
What-e'er thou dost, deliver not thy Sword;
With that thou may'st get off, tho' odds oppose thee:
For me, O, fear not; no, he dares not touch me;
His horrid love, will spare me. Keep thy Sword;
Lest I be ravish'd after thou art slain.

Ad. Instruct me, Gods! What shall *Adrastus* do?

Crr. Do what thou wilt, when she is dead: my Soldiers
With numbers will over-power thee. Is't thy wish
Eurydice should fall before thee?

Ad. Traitor, no.

Better, that thou and I, and all Mankind
Should be no more.

Crr. Then cast thy Sword away,
And yield thee to my mercy, or I strike.

Ad. Hold thy rais'd Arm; give me a moments pause.
My Father, when he blest me, gave me this;
My Son, said he, let this be thy last refuge;
If thou forget'st it, misery attends thee:

Yet Love now charms it from me, which in all
The hazards of my life I never lost.
'Tis thine, my faithful Sword, my only Trust;
Tho' my Heart tells me that the Gift is fatal.

Cres. Fatal! Yes, foolish Love-sick Prince, it shall:

Thy Arrogance, thy Scorn,
My wounds remembrance,
Turn all at once the fatal point upon thee.
Pyracmon to the Palace, dispatch

The King: hang *Hemon* up, for he is Loyal,
And will oppose me: Come, Sir, are you ready?

Adr. Yes, Villain, for whatever thou canst dare.

Eur. Hold *Creon*, or through me, through me you wound.

Adr. Off, Madam, or we perish both: behold
I'm not unarm'd, my Ponyard's in my hand:
Therefore away.

Eur. I'll guard your life with mine.

Cres. Dye both then; there is now no time for dallying.

[*Kill, Eurydice.*

Eur. Ah, Prince, farewell! farewell, my dear *Adrastus*. [*Exit.*

Adr. Unheard of Monster! eldest born of Hell!

Down, to thy Primitive Flames.

[*Enter Creon.*

Cres. Help, Soldiers, help:
Revenge me.

Adr. More, yet more: a thousand wounds!
I'll stamp thee still, thus, to the gaping Furies.

[*Adrastus falls, kill'd by the Soldiers.*

Enter Hemon, Guards with Alcander, and Pyracmon bound:
the Assassins are driven off.

O *Hemon*, I am slain; nor need I name
The inhumane Author of all Villanies;
There he lies gasping.

Cres. If I must plunge in Flames,
Burn first my Arm; base Instrument, unfit
To act the dictates of my daring Mind:
Burn, burn for ever, O weak substitute
Of that, the God, Ambition.

Adr. She's gone; O deadly Marks-man, in the Heart:

Yet in the pangs of death she grasps my Hand:
Her Lips too tremble, as if she would speak
Her last Farewell. O, *Oedipus*, thy fall
Is great; and nobly now thou goest attended!
They talk of Heroes, and Celestial Beauties,
And wondrous pleasures in the other World;
Let me but find her there, I ask no more.

End

[*Exit.*

Enter a Captain in Armour, with Tiresias and Men.
Cap. O, Sir, the Queen *Jocasta*, swift and wild,
As a robb'd Tygress bounding o'er the Woods,
Has acted Murders that amaze mankind;
In twisted Gold I saw her Daughters hang
On the Bed Royal; and her little Sons
Stabb'd through the breasts upon the bloody Pillows.

Hem. Relentless Heav'n! Is then the Fate of *Laius*
Never to be Aton'd? How sacred ought
Kings lives be held, when but the Death of one
Demands an Empire's blood for Expiation?
But see! the furious mad *Jocasta's* here.

*Scene draws, and discovers Jocasta held by her Women, and stabb'd
in many places of her bosom; her hair dishevel'd, her Children
slain upon the Bed.*

Was ever such a sight of so much horror,
And pity, brought to view!

Joc. Ah, cruel Women!
Will you not let me take my last farewell
Of those dear Babes? O let me run and seal
My melting Soul upon their bobbling wounds!
I'll print upon their Coral mouths such kisses,
As shall recall their wandering Spirits home.
Let me go, let me go, or I will tear you piece-meal.
Help, *Hemon*, help:
Help, *Oedipus*; help, Gods; *Jocasta* dyes.

Enter Oedipus above.

Oed. I've found a Window, and I thank the Gods,
'Tis quite unbarr'd: sure by the distant noise,
The height will fit my Fatal purpose well.

Joc. What ho, my *Oedipus*: see where he stands!
His groping Ghost is lodg'd upon a Tow'r,
Nor can it find the Road: Mount, mount my Soul;
I'll wrap thy shivering Spirit in Lament Flames! and so we'll sail:
But see! we're landed on the happy coast:
And all the Golden Strands are cover'd o'er
With glorious Gods, that come to try our cause:
Jove, Jove, whose Majesty now links me down
He who himself burns in unlawful Fires,
Shall judge, and shall acquit us. O, 'tis done!
'Tis fixt by Fate, upon Record Divine:
And *Oedipus* shall be now ever mine.

Oed. Speak, *Hemon*; what has Fate be doing there?
What dreadful deed has mad *Jocasta* done?

Hem. The Queen her self, and all your wretched Offspring,
Are by her Fury slain.

Oed. By all my woes,
She

She has out-done me, in revenge and murder
And I should envy her the sad applause:
But, Oh! my Children! Oh, what have they done?
This was not like the mercy of the Heav'ns,
To set her madness on such Cruelty:
This stirs me more than all my sufferings,
And with my last breath I must call you Tyrants.

Hem. What mean you, Sir?

Oed. Jocasta! lo, I come.

O, *Lajus, Labdacus*, and all you Spirits
Of the *Cadmean* Race, prepare to meet me,
All weeping rang'd along the gloomy Shore;
Extend your Arms t' embrace me; for I come;
May all the Gods too from their Battlements
Behold and wonder at a Mortal's daring;
And, when I knock the Goal of dreadful death,
Shout and applaud me with a clap of Thunder:
Once more, thus wing'd by horrid Fate, I come
Swift as a falling Meteor; lo, I fly,
And thus go downwards, to the darker-Sky.

*[Thunder. He flings himself from the Window.
The Thebans gather about his Body.]*

Hemon. O prophet, *Oedipus* is now no more!
O curs'd effect of the most deep despair!
Oed. Cease your complaints, and bear his body hence:
The dreadful sight will daunt the drooping *Thebans*,
Whom Heav'n decrees to raise with Peace and Glory:
Yet by these terrible examples warn'd,
The sacred Fury that alarms the World,
Let none, tho ne'er so virtuous, Great, and High,
Be judg'd entirely blest before they dye.

Books Printed for *Thomas Chapman.*

<i>Caesar's Commentaries.</i> F ^{ol} .	<i>Oedipus</i> , by Mr. Dryden.
<i>Plutarch's Morals.</i>	<i>Abdelazer.</i>
<i>Kettlewell on the Sacrament.</i>	<i>Country Wife.</i>
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EPILOGUE.

EPILOGUE.

WHAT Sophocles could undertake alone,
 Our Poets found a Work for more than one;
 And therefore Two lay tugging at the piece,
 With all their force, to draw the ponderous Mass from Greece,
 A weight that bent even Seneca's stronger Muscles,
 And which Corneille's Shoulders did refuse;
 So hard it is the Athenian Harp to string,
 So much Two Consuls yield to one just King,
 Terror and Pity this whole Poem sway:
 The mightiest Machines that can mount a Play;
 How heavy will those vulgar Souls be found,
 Whom Two such Engines cannot move from ground;
 When Greece and Rome have smil'd upon this Birth,
 You can but damn for one poor spot of Earth;
 And when your Children find your judgment such,
 They'll scorn their Sires, and wish themselves born Dutch;
 Each haughty Poet will infer with ease,
 How much his Wit must under-write to please;
 As some strong Charles would brandishing advance
 The monumental Sword that conquer'd France;
 So you by judging this, your Judgment's reach
 Thus far you like, that is, thus far you reach;
 Since then the Vote of full Two thousand Years
 Has crown'd this Plot, and all the Dead are theirs;
 Think it a Debt you pay, not Alms you give,
 And in your own defence, let this Play live,
 Think 'em not vain, when Sophocles is shown,
 To praise his worth, they humbly doubt their own;
 Yet as weak States each others Power assure,
 Weak Poets by conjunction are secure,
 Their Treat is what your Palates relish most,
 Charm! Song! and Show! a Murder, and a Ghost!
 We know not what you can desire or hope,
 To please you more, but turning of a Pope.

FINIS